

THE PRACTICE AND DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM
IN PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY

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DEDICATED TO

"Scotty", my son,

who was born in Edinburgh during the time

I was doing my research work on this thesis.

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PREFACE

The importance of the subject of baptism, and the need for accurate knowledge and clear thought upon it has been strongly emphasized in recent years in both Great Britain and on the Continent. H.G. Marsh led the way in England for a re-examination of the origin and meaning of Christian baptism with his book The Origin and Significance of the New Testament Baptism which was first published in 1940. In 1943 the eminent theologian Karl Barth delivered a lecture on the Doctrine of Baptism in the church at Basle in which he rejected infant baptism and upheld a baptism for believers only. This lecture was published in pamphlet-form in 1946 under the title Die Kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe and has recently been translated into English by Rev. E.A. Payne of Regent's Park College, Oxford. Last year Oscar Cullmann answered Karl Barth with his study of baptism entitled Le Baptême des Enfants et la doctrine biblique du baptême.

On January 22, 1946 Dom Gregory Dix delivered a lecture at Oxford University which was later published in pamphlet-form under the title The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism. In this lecture he called for a

re-examination of the doctrine of confirmation in relation to baptism by the Church of England. His contention was that on Scriptural grounds confirmation should precede baptism and not vice versa. Even while writing this thesis an excellent study of Christian Baptism appeared which was written by W.F. Flemington and entitled The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism.

It was because of this renewed interest shown in the doctrine and practice of baptism that I decided to make a careful study for myself. I have not attempted to carry the study any farther than the first century A.D. My definition of the term "Primitive" with reference to Christianity is the first century A.D. which is the New Testament days .

I wish to express my gratitude to Professors William Manson and J.H.S. Burleigh of New College, University of Edinburgh. Also I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor H.H. Rowley, Manchester University and Rev. E.A. Payne ,Regent's Park College,Oxford. I deeply appreciate Miss E.R. Leslie who freely gave of her time to help me in the library.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- B.T.-----Babylonian Talmud.
E.B.-----Encyclopedia Biblica.
E.R.E.-----Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.
H.D.B.-----Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible.
H.U.C.A.----Hebrew Union College Annual.
H.Z.N.T.----Handbuch zum Neuen Testament.
I.C.C.-----International Critical Commentary.
J.B.L.-----Journal of Biblical Literature.
J.T.S.-----Journal of Theological Studies.
M.N.T.C.----Moffatt New Testament Commentary.
N.S.H.R.E.-The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia.
T.S.K.-----Theologische Studien und Kritiken.
T.W.N.T.----Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament.
Z.N.T.W.----Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.
Z.T.K.-----Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche.
Z.W.T.-----Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

From a study of the New Testament evidence it is very obvious that baptism was a proclaimed and practised rite from the earliest days of the Christian community. It seems to have been accepted without any dispute since there appears no trace of a conflict about it except the two passages in Acts which may indicate baptism was not the universal practice of Christians.¹ The New Testament writers accept baptism as a part of the recognized tradition of the Christian life and many times it is so taken for granted in its meaning that there is no attempt made to explain it.²

In the book of Acts baptism as a rite of initiation appears before our eyes suddenly and fully developed. In the first chapter³ the author quotes Jesus as saying in His parting address to His disciples, "For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." A few days after this address of Jesus, Peter, on the day of Pentecost which no doubt is the fulfillment of Acts 1:5, in response to the cry of the crowd, "What shall we do?", said, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of

1 Acts 18:24f and 19:1-7.

2 W. F. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, p. 115.

3 Acts 1:5.

your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."⁴
 Here Peter seems to take for granted the use of baptism.
 Why is it that Peter proposes baptism for those who repent
 when Jesus apparently nullifies it by Acts 1:5? Does this
 rite appear without being directly ascribed to Jesus?

The 120 disciples who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost hardly submitted to Christian baptism in water. Some seek to obviate this fact by saying that they received a baptism of John or a parallel baptism by Jesus' disciples during the early Judaeen ministry and for that reason were under no obligation to be baptized again. However, there is no reason to assume that all the 120 disciples received one or the other of the earlier baptisms mentioned, for when John was put in prison, the ministry of Jesus began and the rite of baptism terminated. If all the disciples were baptized with a baptism of preparation, it is still not possible to say it was equivalent to Christian baptism which was given by Jesus. Later on in the book of Acts this distinction is clearly made at Ephesus.⁵ Some twelve disciples had received the baptism of preparation which was proclaimed and practised by John the Baptist, but they had not been baptized "into the name

⁴ Acts 2:38.

⁵ Acts 19:1-7.

of the Lord Jesus," which was the distinguishing feature of Christian baptism. There is an embarrassing note in the preaching of later Christians because evidence for a Christian baptism of the original disciples was lacking.⁶

Though accounts in Acts and the Pauline Epistles assume baptism as an entrance requirement into the Christian community, the tradition of the Gospels seemingly knows nothing of such a rite.⁷ Why was it not contained in the commission to the Twelve?⁸ Why was it not contained in the commission to the Seventy?⁹ One would expect the Synoptics to mention a command to baptize; however, such a command is found only in Matthew and does not appear in Q, Mark, and Luke.

One readily recognizes from the above discussion that at the very outset of a study of the practice and doctrine of baptism in primitive Christianity that a problem is posed concerning the origin of the Christian rite. Before an

6 Clement of Alexandria alludes to the fantastic tale that Jesus baptized Peter, Peter baptized Andrew and John and they in turn the rest. Cf. G. Anrich, Das Antike Mysterienwesen in seinem Einfluss auf das Christentum, p. 119.

7 John 3:22 and 4:1f do not stand as historical reports of Jesus' custom but as H. Lietzmann, The Beginnings of the Christian Church, p. 80, says, "perhaps indicate the direction in which we must look for a solution to the problem."

8 Mark 6:7-12 and parallels.

9 Luke 10:1-20.

examination of the evidence about the doctrine and practice of the rite is attempted, it will be necessary to search for origins of Christian baptism. Three possible sources are suggested. First, the traditional belief that baptism was instituted by Jesus in His parting address to His disciples; second, that it was adopted by the Christians from similar practices in the pagan world; and third, that it was a custom of the Jews which was practised by John the Baptist and inherited by the early Christians. Part I of this thesis will be the investigation of the possible sources of Christian baptism.

PART I

ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

Chapter I

A COMMAND OF JESUS

Jesus Himself did not administer the rite of baptism but during the preliminary stages of the Judaeian ministry when His ministry paralleled that of John, His disciples baptized.¹ However, there is no trace of the continuation of this after the imprisonment of John when Jesus returned to Galilee.² It is interesting to note that baptism is never mentioned among the conditions for discipleship.³ Nothing is mentioned about a water baptism for followers of Christ in Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5, 11:16; and John 20:22. There is only the mention of spirit baptism.

The passages in the New Testament that are used to trace the institution of baptism to a command of Jesus are three.⁴ Of the three Matthew 28:19 is the only one that is valid for consideration because John 3:5 does not apply here and Mark 16:16 belongs to the spurious appendix of the Gospel and is dependent upon Matthew 28:19.⁵ John 3:5 is not valid for upholding baptism as instituted by Jesus even if it is held

1 John 3:22 and John 4:1f.

2 Mark 1:14.

3 Matthew 8:31f and Luke 9:59-62.

4 Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; John 3:5.

5 Paul Feine, "Baptism," N. S. H. R. E., Vol. I, p. 435.

that water baptism is the meaning here, because it does not imply that it is instituted by Jesus but rather suggests a practice which He found existing and accepted. If Matthew 28:19 cannot be considered as a baptismal command of Jesus, then there is no direct word from Jesus which institutes baptism. Is this final command of Jesus genuine? Is it original in the Matthew account? Is it authentic? The majority of scholars hold it to be an "appended theological explanation,"⁶ a "legendary account,"⁷ or a statement pushed back by Matthew to Christ Himself for approval.⁸ It is therefore essential that this verse be examined to see if it is a genuine part of Matthew's Gospel. Lake suggests a possible critical approach in his rejection of the verse:

The cumulative evidence of three lines of criticism (textual, literary, historical) is distinctly against the ipsissima verba of Christ in instituting Christian baptism.⁹

It will be advisable to take these three criticisms of Matthew 28:19 and evaluate each separately.

6 Hans Lietzmann, op. cit., p. 80.

7 Rudolph Bultmann, Jesus and The Word, pp. 152f.

8 Ernst Teichmann, "Die Taufe bei Paulus," Z. T. K., 1896. p. 357. Teichmann says here that baptism "trägt deutlich den Stempel der spätern Zeit." Cf. A. Loisy, The Birth of the Christian Religion, p. 230.

9 Kirsopp Lake, "Baptism," E. R. E., Vol. I, pp. 380f.

1. Textual Criticism.

External evidence is definitely in favor of the inclusion of Matthew 28:19 as a part of Matthew's Gospel. The verse is found in all extant Greek manuscripts, both uncial and minuscules. All the extant versions also have it. The Didache¹⁰ which was written about 150 A. D. includes it with the addition of "in living water." Justin Martyr¹¹ in about 150-160 A. D. gives the quotation. Furthermore, it is given by the Doctrine of Addai,¹² by Irenaeus,¹³ and by Eusebius of Caesarea.¹⁴ However, Eusebius quotes Matthew 28:19 twenty-one times either omitting everything between ἔθνη and διδάσκοντες or in the form πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου διδάσκοντες κ. τ. λ. this latter form being the most frequent. F. C. Conybeare¹⁵ was the first modern scholar to notice this difference and used it as evidence against the textual validity of Matthew 28:19.

10 Didache VII.

11 Apologia 1:61.

12 See F. C. Burkitt, Evangelion da-Mepharresche, 1.173; 153.

13 Against Heresies, III. XVII.1.

14 Historica Ecclesiastica, Demonstratio Evangelia, Theophania, and Contra Marcellum Ancyran.

15 F. C. Conybeare, "The Eusebian Form of the Text of Matthew 28:19," Z. N. T. W., 1901, Vol. II, pp. 275-288.

Conybeare was answered by Chase¹⁶ and Riggerbach¹⁷ who established the baptismal command on textual grounds. Conybeare was supported in his view by Kirsopp Lake in his inaugural lecture at Leiden:

The really important thing is we can show that Eusebius of Caesarea, living in one of the greatest Christian libraries of the fourth century, knew Mt. 28:19, not in the traditional text, but in a form which omitted the command to baptize in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost...¹⁸

It does seem strange that Eusebius would invariably quote the shorter form that omitted baptism. It seems incredible that he would have done so either because of accident or for a purpose.

Lake¹⁹ contends that "the tendency would have been to replace the Eusebian text by the ecclesiastical formula of baptism." If this be true then transcriptional evidence is in favor of the text omitting baptism. The question naturally arises as to whether "transcriptional probability" outweighs

16 F. H. Chase, "The Lord's Command to Baptize," J. T. S., July 1905, Vol. I, pp. 481-521.

17 F. Riggerbach, "Der trinitarische Taufbefehl, Mt. 28:19, nach seiner ursprunglichen Textgestalt und seiner Authentie untersucht," in Beitrage zur Forderung Christliche Theologische, 1903, Vol. VII.

18 K. Lake, The Influence of Textual Criticism on the Exegesis of the New Testament, p. 9.

19 F. J. Foakes-Jackson and K. Lake, The Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. I, p. 336.

"intrinsic probability." Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that when Eusebius writes concerning John the Baptist and quotes from Josephus²⁰ he alters the text. Since Eusebius stands alone as evidence for the shorter command that omits baptism and since he has quoted incorrectly on other matters, it would seem that as far as textual criticism is concerned Matthew 28:19 still stands as the ipsissima verba of Jesus in instituting Christian baptism. Even though the manuscript evidence is in favor of Matthew 28:19 as a part of the text, this does not carry with it the proof that these are the words of Jesus. The text has been established as genuine and not the oral tradition. For that reason it is necessary to carry forward the investigation into the field of literary criticism.

2. Literary Criticism.

Even if the passage stands as genuine in Matthew, it is objected further that it stands alone in the New Testament. As has already been stated the passage in the last chapter of Mark is not to be considered because it belongs to the section of Mark generally recognized as spurious, and only one of several attempts to complete the Gospel. Mark, Luke, and Q are silent on a command to baptize. The Synoptics make Jesus

²⁰ Historica Ecclesiastica, I.XI.4-6.

to the very last approve of John's baptism²¹ but nowhere is it listed as a condition for discipleship.²² Jesus warned His disciples that a baptism through sufferings awaited them.²³ The Synoptics at the very outset state that Jesus would not baptize with water like John but with the Holy Spirit and fire.²⁴ In the Fourth Gospel there seems to be a difference of opinion as to whether Jesus Himself baptized. In John 3:22 it is clearly stated that Jesus baptized, but in 4:1f this statement is corrected and he contends that Jesus did not baptize but His disciples did. In Luke the final commission for the disciples is to wait in Jerusalem until they get clothed with power from on high²⁵ but not one word is mentioned about baptism. This is very strange since Luke records the sermon of Peter (Acts 2:14-39) where baptism is commanded. In the commission of Jesus recorded by the writer of the Fourth Gospel a reception of the Holy Spirit is experienced but there is no command to baptize.²⁶

Even though this command stands alone in the New Testament

21 Matthew 21:25; Mark 11:30, Luke 20:4.

22 Matthew 8:22; 10:38; 16:24, Luke 9:23, 59-62; 14:27.

23 Mark 10:38f; Luke 12:50.

24 Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 11:16.

25 Luke 24:49.

26 John 20:22.

this is no valid reason for rejecting it as the word of Jesus. Those scholars²⁷ who do not hesitate to reject it as additional material of a later date are very hesitant in rejecting the Eucharist as a rite with no dominical authority. On the basis of this criticism the two rites are upon equal footing, seeing that the command to continue the rite of the Lord's Supper occurs only once in the New Testament and that not in the Gospels but in the writings of Paul.²⁸ One is hardly justified with the example of the Lord's Supper before him, in upholding the arguments from silence to indicate that Jesus did not institute baptism, "seeing that the evidence of the New Testament taken as a whole seems to demand for the rite some measure of dominical authority."²⁹ However, this matter will be dealt with shortly. It is now essential to consider the other phase of criticism.

3. Historical Criticism.

There are scholars who will accept without question the textual validity of Matthew 28:19. Many go so far as to overlook the single occurrence of the command to baptize. However, when the command is viewed in the light of historical

27 Cf. Loisy, op. cit., pp. 82f; Lietzmann, op. cit., pp. 162f.

28 I Cor. 11:24, 25. Also in Luke 22:19b but here in a "Western non-interpolation" which most scholars reject as original.

29 Flemington, op. cit., p. 128.

criticism, a majority of New Testament scholars are of the opinion that the command is either unauthentic or else has been misplaced by the author in the order of the teachings of Jesus.

a. Objection to the Trinitarian formula. The authenticity of Matthew 28:19 has been called in question due to the use of the trinitarian formula connected with baptism, because, according to Acts and Paul's Epistles,³⁰ believers of the early apostolic times were baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" or "into the name of the Lord Jesus" and not "in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit."³¹ Harnack believes that "the Trinitarian formula was foreign to the mouth of Jesus."³² Beyschlag contends that the formula did not proceed from Jesus because the practice of the Apostles in Acts and in the Pauline Epistles of baptizing "in the name of the Lord Jesus" renders the detailed formula inconceivable. Yet on the other hand he concludes that "the practice of baptism as a rite of reception ... cannot very well be explained without an appointment of Jesus underlying it."³⁴

30 J. H. Scholten, Die Taufformel, p. 10.

31 Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3; I Cor. 1:13-15.

32 Adolph Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. I, p. 79, n. 2.

33 W. Beyschlag, New Testament Theology, Vol. I, p. 178.

34 Ibid., p. 178.

Weizsäcker³⁵ and McGiffert³⁶ suggest that the Trinitarian formula is explained by the Apostolic benediction of II Cor.

13:13. McGiffert also proposes:

It may have had its origin in the prophecy of the Baptist recorded in all the Gospels, that the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Ghost, and in Jesus' own promise, that He would send the Holy Spirit as another advocate in His place, and that He and the Father and the Spirit would abide with His disciples.³⁷

Zahn³⁸ looks in the opposite direction and explains II Cor. 13:13 by Matthew 28:19. Not only this, but he further claims that the command to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is not given as a formula.³⁹ He points out that in the Didache⁴⁰ there is a reference to Christians baptizing "in the name of the Lord" along with the Trinitarian formula. By this reference he has not proved his point because in all probability this is the beginning of the Trinitarian formula as opposed to the simple formula.

However, it is doubtful that the writer of the First Gospel intended to represent Christ as prescribing the formula

35 C. Weizsäcker, The Apostolic Age, Vol. II, p. 254.

36 A. C. McGiffert, A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age, p. 61f.

37 Ibid., pp. 61f.

38 T. Zahn, Introduction to the N. T., Vol. II, p. 309f.

39 Ibid., p. 591 n. 6.

40 Didache IX.5 and VII.1,3; also Justin Martyr, Apologia I, 61.

which should be used at baptism. It is quite true that later ecclesiastical custom made it such as Tertullian⁴¹ shows when he asserts "law of baptism has been imposed and the formula prescribed." It is also for Tertullian a trine immersion "and it is not once only but thrice, that we are immersed into the Three persons, at each several mention of Their Names".⁴² But the question is not concerned with later ecclesiastical custom. It is: Did Jesus intend for the command to be a formula? Allen⁴³ seems to take a sane view toward the passage in saying:

The words rather mean baptizing them into the fellowship of the Father, or of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and describe, not the formula to be used at baptism, but the end and aim which would be secured in and through baptism.

The language in Acts and Paul's Epistles varies too much to be looked upon as a formula as Plummer⁴⁴ would have one to believe.

Some scholars who hold to the genuineness of Matthew 28:19 in every other respect are inclined to look upon the formula as being inserted in accordance with later liturgical usage. There is no textual basis for excising this part of

⁴¹ De Baptismo 13.

⁴² Adversus Praxean.

⁴³ St. Matthew, ICC, p. 307.

⁴⁴ Commentary on Matthew, p. 433.

the verse. Also there are no overwhelmingly convincing objections. When Harnack says that it "is foreign to the mouth of Jesus" he must disregard the Fourth Gospel⁴⁵ where an association of Son, Father and Holy Spirit is given. Allen⁴⁶ thinks that already in Mark 13:32 there is the presupposition of the formula "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." It is reasonable to believe that this is no formula at all "but simply an expression of the fact that through baptism a man became a member of the Christian community".⁴⁷ Perhaps the reason that the disciples in the early church did not baptize in the triple formula is that they did not understand it as a fixed ritual formulary. There seems to be no basis for assuming that those who understood these words would understand them as an authoritative liturgical rubric.

b. Irreconcilable with I Cor. 1:14-17. It is objected by some scholars that the Apostle Paul in I Cor. 1:14-17 is not conscious of any command from Jesus to baptize. Clemen⁴⁸ believes that this statement renders the saying of Jesus in Matthew improbable and he further states:

This saying of Paul almost certainly precludes

⁴⁵ John 14-16.

⁴⁶ Op. cit., p. 306.

⁴⁷ J. C. Lambert, The Sacraments in the New Testament, p. 51.

⁴⁸ Carl Clemen, Primitive Christianity and Its Non-Jewish Sources, p. 214; also Paul Feine, "Baptism," op. cit., Vol. I, p. 435.

the supposition that Jesus had Himself, or through His disciples, merely continued the practice of John. His so doing would have been virtually equivalent to a commission to baptize.⁴⁹

Teichmann⁵⁰ questions the genuineness of Matthew 28:19 because if the first disciples had ascribed the importance to baptism as that given in the supposed dominical command, Paul, upholding his equal authority as an Apostle would not have deviated from the practice of the rest. Moffatt⁵¹ suggests that the reason Paul did not baptize many was due to the fact that "most Christians seem to have baptized themselves as Paul himself had done. It was only an exceptional case that a convert would insist on being baptized by some apostle to whom he owed a deep personal debt." Or it could very easily be that Paul was not concerned with baptism as a rite to be administered by himself to his converts since he was afraid that the baptized would attach undue importance to the person of the agent who administered the rite. To say that I Cor. 1:14-17 strongly indicates a lack of acquaintance with a command of Jesus to baptize is to miss the meaning entirely. It is quite apparent from other passages⁵² in his Epistles

49 Ibid., p. 214.

50 Ernst Teichmann, op. cit., pp. 370f.

51 James Moffatt, Commentary on First Corinthians, Moffatt Commentary, pp. 11f.

52 Rom. 6:3ff; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; I Cor. 12:13; and I Cor. 10:2.

that this statement of Clemen is irrational.

c. Invalid as a post-resurrection command. Keim,⁵³ Bruce,⁵⁴ and others who follow the Ritschlian school affirm that there is no basis for believing that Jesus resumed teaching after the resurrection and would object to this passage because it has a post-resurrection setting. Harnack⁵⁵ argues that Paul knows nothing of a risen Jesus who delivers speeches and gives commandments.

Keim raises no objection against the command itself but simply questions the setting. He feels that the Evangelist has removed the command from its original position to a later event "wishing to exhibit him who was ascending into heaven as the Lord of heaven and earth, therefore as the legitimate possessor of the nations, and therefore as the ordainer of baptism for all nations".⁵⁶ Keim places the institution of the rite on the night of the betrayal of Jesus.⁵⁷ Those who believe that a risen Jesus is able to deliver speeches have no difficulty in accepting Matthew 28:19 on this basis.

53 Theodor Keim, Jesus of Nazareth, Vol. 5, p. 338.

54 A. B. Bruce, The Kingdom of God, p. 257.

55 Adolph Harnack, What is Christianity?, pp. 160f; also Scholten, op. cit., pp. 5f.

56 Op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 338.

57 Ibid., p. 339; also Bruce, op. cit., p. 257.

d. Irreconcilable with narrowness of the disciples.

Jackson and Lake⁵⁸ discount the statement of Matthew 28:19 as a historical fact on the basis of the early church's acquaintance with no such command. If the last words of Jesus had been to order his disciples to go to "all nations", would there have been so much trouble before the Apostles recognized the propriety of doing such? Why is it that an appeal is made to the story about Cornelius at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 rather than their own experience on a mountain in Galilee.

Scholten⁵⁹ objects to the universal nature of the command "allen volkern" because it is false to say that Jesus would have, after giving the command in Matthew 10:5-23, instructed His disciples to go to the heathen before Israel was completely evangelized. Not only Scholten but Jackson and Lake and others⁶⁰ are in error here because this objection is based on a misunderstanding about the entrance of Gentiles into the Christian community. The problem with the Apostles is not whether the Gentiles are to be received

58 Jackson and Lake, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 336f.

59 Op. cit., p. 7.

60 Paul Feine, op. cit., p. 435; J. H. Scholten, op. cit., p. 7. James Moffatt, The Historical New Testament, pp. 648ff.

into the fellowship, but whether they are to become Jews by submitting to the Jewish laws and customs. From the influence of proselytism in Diaspora Judaism the early Christians in Palestine were compelled to see that they were to include the Gentiles. But the problem of Peter in his entering the house of Cornelius and eating with him⁶¹ and the whole problem of the Jerusalem Conference⁶² were both centered in the requirement of circumcision of the Gentiles before they could be in a condition which would be acceptable for social relationship with the Jewish Christians.

Other minor objections have been set forward but lack any sufficient evidence for a serious consideration. It is held that Jesus refers to baptism as a past practice of John the Baptist in Matthew 21:25 (cf. 11:11) and that John himself proclaimed the prospect of a spiritual baptism which is contrasted with his water baptism.⁶³ Some see in certain sayings of Jesus⁶⁴ a fresh application to the idea of baptism.

There are those⁶⁵ who believe that though baptism was

61 Acts 11:1ff.

62 Acts 15.

63 Mark 1:8 and parallels.

64 Luke 12:50; Mark 10:38; Acts 1:5; 11:16.

65 P. Feine, op. cit., p. 436; H. J. Holtzmann, "Die Taufe im Neuen Testament," Z. W. T. 1879, p. 405; also H. J. Holtzmann, Lehrbuch der Neutestamentliche Theologie, Vol. I, p. 383.

not a word of Jesus Himself, yet because of His own example in submitting to the rite of John the Baptist, baptism is situated at the heart of the early Church. But in whatever light one takes Matthew 28:19, whether it is an authentic saying of Jesus or not, one is still faced with the problem of the universal practice of the rite in the beginning of Christianity which practice must have convinced the disciples that they were acting in accordance with the teaching of Jesus. Jackson and Lake, however, surmount this difficulty without any trouble by saying that the material containing the early practice of baptism by the Christians is redactional.⁶⁶

Though holding that the command to baptize may not be the words of Jesus, Feine presents a reasonable position for the origin of Christian baptism apart from such dominical authority:

The word of Jesus in Acts 1:5 repeats John the Baptist's prophecy of spiritual baptism (Mark 1:8). Moreover, the farewell discourses in John and the expression *epangelia tou pneumantos*, which occurs like a technical term in Acts II,33; Gal. III,15; Eph. I,13, postulate an utterance of Jesus concerning the gift of the Spirit to the disciples. But Jesus had spoken of baptism as a symbol of the gift of the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit was for him the antitype of the baptism of John. When the disciples, after the completion of the Messianic work, took up again the baptismal rite which they had formerly practised at his command

66 Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 339f.

(John III,22; IV, 1,2) as a preparation for admission into the Messianic congregation, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the baptized, they came to the conviction that they were acting according to the will of their Master and now combined the above-mentioned words concerning the Spirit and Christian baptism. Christian baptism has as its real root the baptism of John.⁶⁷

So even apart from any word of Jesus the validity of the rite is far from being annulled and it was only natural that the use of baptism be revived since some of Jesus' disciples had been the followers of the Baptist, if the Fourth Gospel tradition is correct.⁶⁸ But does one really have to explain the universal practice of baptism in the early church as a carry over of the Johannine rite or as an adoption and adaptation of a Jewish custom⁶⁹ even if there is no direct word from Jesus which institutes the rite?

Jesus' institution of the Christian rite of baptism could in all probability depend upon His own life and ministry. Flemington⁷⁰ is correct in setting the activity of Jesus against the background of "prophetic symbolism," in seeing the significance of Jesus' baptism by John and in understanding the comparison of baptism to Jesus' death and resurrection⁷¹

⁶⁷ Op. cit., p. 436.

⁶⁸ W. L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem, p. 18, n. 25.

⁶⁹ Kirsopp Lake, "Baptism," E. R. E. Vol. II, pp. 381f.

⁷⁰ Op. cit., p. 127.

⁷¹ The metaphorical use of baptism by Jesus in Luke 12:50 and Mark 10:38 anticipates Paul's interpretation of baptism as signifying a "dying" and "rising" in Rom. 6:3ff.

which ushered in a "new age." These are far greater aids in making intelligible the ready acceptance of baptism from the beginning as an entrance rite for the Christian community. The kerygma of the Apostolic Church was the good news of salvation attained through the crucified and risen Lord. Baptism became the "outward embodiment" of the apostolic preaching and its concrete "symbol."⁷² "Baptism with water," says Flemington, "was not superseded, because the outward action, which had possessed such profound meaning by Jesus himself, was found to be expressive of, and also to help in bringing about, that re-direction of personality, that turning to God and acceptance of his rule, which is what the New Testament means by 'repentance'."⁷³

72 Flemington, op. cit., p. 127.

73 Ibid., p. 121.

Chapter II

ADOPTION OF A PAGAN PRACTICE

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MacCullough¹ shows by abundant evidence that among many religions there are rites which are practised at infancy or later in life which bear a close resemblance to the ceremony of Christian baptism. He cites examples from tribes in Africa, natives of the Malay Archipelago, American Indians, Tibetans, Mongolians, Indians, Egyptians, Teutons, Celts, Greeks, Romans, Polynesians, and Lapps. The use of water for religious purification is shown to be almost a universal practice.

The evidence shows that for the most part the water is used in particular for purificatory purposes, but the tendency in many religions is to concentrate water into one significant rite such as that found in proselyte baptism of Judaism and Christian baptism. MacCullough, in suggesting there is a resemblance of ethnic baptisms to the ceremony of Christian baptism, observes that "sometimes that likeness is only on the surface; in other cases it extends deeper, and the pagan rite has also a religious and ethical purpose."²

A second suggested source for the origin of Christian

1 J. A. MacCullough, "Baptism (Ethnic)," E. R. E., Vol. II, pp. 367-375; Joseph Thomas, Le Mouvement Baptiste en Palestine et Syrie.

2 Op. cit., p. 367.

baptism, in view of the similar practices that were already prevalent in the pagan world in Jesus' day, is the adoption of such a rite from the mystery religions of the Graeco-Oriental world or from a Baptist sect beyond the Jordan.

1. The Mystery Religions.

Though the evidence for the existence of baptism in the mystery religions as early as Paul's day is very slight,³ it must be considered as a possibility as Nock so advisedly says:

For the origin of the custom it is therefore not necessary to look outside Judaea, nevertheless, since it has been maintained by many students that we must look to Hellenistic mysteries, it is necessary to examine the evidence.⁴

In recent years it has not been infrequently argued that Christian baptism was incorporated into the Christian tradition from the practices of the Graeco-Oriental world and that they possessed from the very beginning a sacramental character. Attempts have been made to explain much of what has been termed sacramental teaching in Paul as a borrowing from the contemporary mystery religions. It is quite true that lustral washings were known and practised in the pagan world. The bitterness with which Justin Martyr⁵ and Tertullian⁶

3 Sydney Cave, The Gospel of St. Paul, p. 273; cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions, p. 229.

4 A. D. Nock, "Early Gentile Christianity and Its Hellenistic Background," Essays on the Trinity and Incarnation, edited by A. E. J. Rawlinson, p. 112.

5 Apologia 1,62.

6 De Baptismo 5.

inveigh against the demons for having counterfeited the Christian rite renders argument unnecessary that Christian baptism at a very early date was looked upon as parallel to the lustral rites of pagan cults. Tertullian, after making an observation of pagan baptism, says:

We recognize here also the zeal of the devil rivalling the things of God, while we find him, too, practicing baptism in his subjects. What similarity is there? The unclean cleanses! the ruiner sets free! the damned absolves! He will, forsooth, destroy his own work, by washing away the sins which he himself inspires.

The fullest account of the initiation into the mysteries is given by Apuleius⁸ in his account of the initiation of Lucius into the rites of Isis. Apuleius wrote in the second century A. D. and "it is doubtful if this ablution was more than formal cleansing."⁹ Angus¹⁰ cites archeological evidence for such baptisms and the importance attached to them. He mentions a lacus for baptism found in the Hall of Initiation in the Temple of Men at Pisidian Antioch and the underground pagan shrine on the Via Salaria which contained a tank that served as a baptistry for some mystery cult.

From Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria evidence is presented showing that baptism and lustral purifications

7 De Baptismo 5 and also De Praescriptione Haereticorum 40.

8 Metamorphoses XI, 18-25.

9 Sydney Cave, op. cit., p. 274.

10 S. Angus, The Mystery-Religions and Christianity, p. 82.

were required in the mystery religions. It is by baptism (per lavacrum) that members were initiated into the Mysteries of Isis and Mithra.¹¹ Those who were baptized in the Apollinarian and Eleusinian rites believed that the result of the baptism brought regeneration and remission of the penalties of their sins.¹² "It is not without reason," said Clement of Alexandria, "that in the Mysteries current among the Greeks lustrations hold the premier place."¹³

Apuleius¹⁴ is the authority for the full understanding of the Isis Mystery-Religion by the description of the initiation of Lucius at Cenchreae. In the presence of a band of Isis-worshippers he was bathed by the high-priest in the sacred laver. As a result of the bath the candidate was purified.¹⁵ The best known of the purificatory rites are those of the Greek Eleusinia in which no one was admitted who had not undergone the rite. The candidate took the bath of cleansing in the sea and emerged from the water a new person with a new name.¹⁶

11 Tertullian, De Baptismo 5.

12 Ibid., 5.

13 Stromata, V. 11.

14 Metamorphoses, XI, 18-25.

15 Ibid., XI, 23 "iamque tempore, ut aiebat sacerdos, id postulante stipatum me religiosa cohorte deducit ad proximas balneas et prius sueto lavacro traditum, praefatus deum veniam, purissime circumrorans abluit."

16 Clement of Alexandria, op. cit., V. 71, 72.

The most striking analogy of Paul's idea of baptism in its relation to the death and resurrection of Christ is that of the ceremony of the taurobolium. The candidate was seated in a trench underneath an open grating on which a bull was sacrificed. The blood of the bull, as it rushed through the open grating, fell upon the candidate and he was declared to be re-born. The taurobolium was used for purification and also as in initiating the candidate to the rites of the Great Mother which became so popular all over the Roman Empire at the beginning of Christianity. However, the ceremony of the taurobolium "is inadmissible as evidence for our period."¹⁷

While it is true that the mystery cults possessed a rite of baptism which was similar to that of Christianity, yet that is not demonstrable proof that the early Christians took over the rite from the cults nor is it true to say that Christianity was affected by mystery cult ideas before the second century A. D. Whatever may be said for the mystery influences on later Christianity is no real evidence that the early disciples owed anything to them for their ideas. Marsh is correct in his conclusions:

We may admit the striking likeness of some
Christian rites to acts performed in mystery cults,

¹⁷ H. A. A. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 230.

but a mere outward similarity is not definite proof of connection.¹⁸

It may be further stated that the analogy suggested between the Christian rite of baptism and that of the mystery cults is very slight and hardly recognizable.¹⁹ Baptism in the mystery cults presents no evidence of its being any more than a preparatory bath which can in no way be identified with an actual initiation.²⁰ Nock, after citing the Eleusis' bath, the bath mentioned by Apuleius, the rites of Bacchanalia as given by Livy, the rites of the priestess of the Corybants at Erythrae, says that "in all these cases the washing or baptism is something preliminary."²¹ It is true that during the time of Tertullian the rite was looked upon as initiatory and efficacious, but in the beginning this was not the significance.²²

Kennedy notes two significant facts about the baptismal rites of the mystery cults:

No trace of the baptism of the initiated 'into the name' of any of the mystery-deities, although the cult-action may have formed part of a definite acknowledgment of the deity in question. Nor is there any hint that the influence of the Divine $\pi\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$, a feature

18 H. G. Marsh, The Origin and the Significance of the New Testament Baptism, p. 4.

19 J. M. Creed, The Gospel According to St. Luke, p. 310.

20 Ibid., p. 310; Joseph Thomas, op. cit., p. 319, points out that Leipoldt has confused the bath with the initiation.

21 A. D. Nock, op. cit., p. 114. Cf. G. Anrich, op. cit., p. 8.

22 J. Thomas, op. cit., p. 340.

which we have seen to be current in mystic doctrine, was ever connected with the ritual of lustration.²³

From this statement of Kennedy there is evidence for two marked differences between the baptism of the mystery cults and that of Christianity. Oepke²⁴ has submitted further evidence in the direction of differences. He points out that Christian baptism is "once for all" (cf. Romans 6:10 on ἐφάπαξ) whereas the rites in the mysteries were repeated. Furthermore it may be noticed that the extant evidence generally quoted as affording the most striking parallel to some of the Christian language about Christian baptism, namely the taurobolium²⁵ is much later than the period during which the New Testament significance of baptism was determined. The celebrated inscription which contains the words "taurobolio criobolioque in aeternum renatus" is dated around 276 A. D.²⁶ In all probability the practice was earlier, but there is no evidence for showing that it determined the significance for Christian baptism. There are those who hold that though baptism did not have its origin in the mysteries; nevertheless, some of the language of Paul can only be accounted for by a

23 Kennedy, op. cit., p. 229f; A. Schweitzer, Paul and His Interpreters, p. 208f.

24 A. Oepke, "βάπτω, βαπτίζω," T. W. N. T., Vol. I, p. 540.

25 F. Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 70f.

26 Cf. Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, VI, 510.

connection with the mysteries.²⁷

Oepke,²⁸ after giving a detailed account of the Hellenistic rites of lustration which have been considered as parallels to and sources for John's baptism, concludes that there is not a single syllable in the Gospels to hint that baptism was the offspring of Oriental syncretism.

2. Baptism in the Mandaean Religion.

In recent years the Mandaeans have come to the foreground in New Testament research²⁹ and many scholars have been infected with what Goguel³⁰ calls a "fever" in their study of the Mandaean literature. Since the Mandaeans employed a rite

27 This will be considered later on the doctrine and practice of baptism in the Epistles of Paul.

28 A. Oepke, op. cit., p. 534.

29 R. Reitzenstein, Die Vorgeschichte der Christlichen Taufe; W. Brandt, "Mandaeans," E. R. E., Vol. VIII, pp. 380-393; E. S. Drower, The Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran; F. C. Burkitt, "The Mandaeans," J. T. S., April, 1928, pp. 225-235; A. Loisy, Le Mandéisme et les Origines chrétiennes; M. Goguel, Au Seuil de l'Evangile Jean-Baptiste; K. Kessler, "Mandaeans," N. S. H. R. E., Vol. VII, pp. 146-151; S. A. Pallis, Mandaean Studies; W. L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, pp. 212-219; J. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 184-267; M. Lidzbarski, "Mandäische Fragen," Z. N. T. W., Vol. XXVI, 1927, pp. 70-75; H. Lietzmann, The Beginnings of the Christian Church, p. 54; G. H. C. MacGregor and A. C. Purdy, Jew and Greek Tutors unto Christ, pp. 321-329; et. al.

30 M. Goguel, op. cit., p. 113, "une sorte de fièvre mandéene paraît s'être, depuis quelques années, emparée d'une partie de la critique allemande."

of immersion in water which was regarded not only as a symbol of life, but to a certain degree as life itself, and since John the Baptist is a prominent figure in their cult, it has been argued that there is some connection between the baptism of the Mandaeans and that of the Christians and John.

Some scholars³¹ hold the opinion that the Mandaeans are descendents of a Baptist sect like the disciples mentioned in Acts 18:25ff and Acts 19:1ff. This view is untenable since the references to John the Baptist appear in a later portion of the Mandaean tradition. It may also be doubted if the Jewish elements contained in the Mandaean literature came through Judaism or through the Syriac version of the Old Testament.³²

It is urged by others³³ that the Mandaeans are heretical Christians. Burkitt says that they are Dissenters and Mandaeanism is "a mixture of Christian and non-Christian elements, the Christian elements being mostly derived from Marcionite and Manichaeian sources."³⁴

Still another view³⁵ regards Mandaism as an amalgam of Gnostic elements and certain of these elements are pre-Chris-

31 R. Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, p. 24.

32 F. C. Burkitt, op. cit., p. 228.

33 Notably by Burkitt, Church and Gnosis, p. 105.

34 Ibid., p. 103.

35 MacGregor and Purdy, op. cit., p. 324f.

tian. This view seems to be more probable than the others. Reitzenstein³⁶ suggests three possibilities of a relation of Christian baptism to the Mandaean baptism. First, the Christian baptism stems out of the Jewish purification ceremonies and gives the prototype for the Mandaean. Second, the Mandaean gives the prototype for the Christian. Third, both have a length of time existing beside one another but are rites with different origins. Reitzenstein is in favor of the second view and says that baptism was already an existing rite in the "Taufgemeinden des Jordantales"³⁷ before the time of John the Baptist and that John took it over as a leading feature of his movement. Reitzenstein makes of the Mandaeans a pre-Christian sect abiding in the Transjordan section. He holds that John's movement was a syncretistic Judaeo-Mandaean cult.

The view of Reitzenstein is not tenable for lack of evidence. That there is a relationship between the baptism of the Mandaeans and John and the Christians is undeniable but to contend for dependence of John and the Christians upon the Mandaean cult is another matter, especially since such is unproved.³⁸

36 R. Reitzenstein, op. cit., p. 152f, 232-233, 268.

37 Ibid., p. 152.

38 A. Loisy, The Birth of the Christian Religion, p. 397, n. 15.

Pallis³⁹ counteracts the wild theory of Reitzenstein by treating the Mandaeans as a department of Babylonian religion and points out that their baptism shows no affinity to Judaism. Their rite was not only initiatory but was repeated on festival days and on Sundays.

From an examination of the evidence of baptism in the mystery cults and among the Mandaeans it is obvious that the rite is not borrowed by the Christians from these sources. The adoption of the rite of baptism for the Christians needs no explanation from non-Jewish sources⁴⁰ but an explanation is found in Judaism.

39 S. A. Pallis, op. cit., p. 163f.

40 W. L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem, p. 18, n. 25; P. Feine, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 436.

Chapter III

JEWISH LUSTRAL RITES AND PROSELYTE BAPTISM

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If it is assumed that Matthew 28:19 is a command of Jesus or that Christian baptism rests upon dominical authority, then it must also be assumed that the disciples of Jesus knew what He meant when He spoke of baptism. In that case it is necessary to interpret the meaning of baptism in the minds of the disciples in the light of the rite administered by John since some of them had been his disciples and since Jesus Himself had submitted to the rite. But even if it is held that Matthew 28:19 is not an authentic statement of Jesus and Christian baptism is not in keeping with the life and teachings of Jesus, it will still be necessary to examine the antecedent of Christian baptism which is the Johannine rite. However, even behind the baptism that John proclaimed there are deeper roots embedded in Judaism which bear a natural relationship to John's rite. In the next chapter a full discussion will be given to the Johannine rite, but at this point it seems logical to examine some of the sources that may account for the baptism that John preached.

It was really a natural course of action that John pursued when he adopted baptism and there is no need, as has already been shown, to seek an explanation from non-Jewish sources, "since it would easily suggest itself to anyone who

was familiar with the ceremonial washings of orthodox Judaism."¹ There are several prototypes in Israel which viewed together seem to explain the meaning of John's baptism.

1. Levitical Lustrations.

In the Levitical washings found in the Old Testament most assuredly the Johannine rite finds its earliest historical connection.² Among the Jews the demand for ritual purity was exacting. In order to attain this ritual purity there were strict rules for lustrations which were binding upon the people and the priests.³ Brandt⁴ summarizes the post-exilic lustrations under eleven titles. The necessity for such cleansings arise out of natural functions or disease such as sexual intercourse, childbirth, and leprosy. But there is no evidence in Jewish literature to imply that these lustral washings in themselves would remove moral stains.⁵ These washings were strictly ceremonial and possessed no ethical

1 W. L. Knox, op. cit., p. 18, n. 25.

2 J. C. Lambert, The Sacraments in the New Testament, p. 57.

3 Leviticus 11-15; 16:23f; 17:15; 22:5-7; Exodus 29:4; Numbers 19:19-22, et al.

4 W. Brandt, Die Jüdischen Baptismen, p. 20ff.

5 W. Morgan, The Religion and Theology of Paul, p. 209.

significance.⁶ Oesterley and Box who hold to the view that ritual washings in early Israel are a prototype of baptism also say that they possessed a sacramental character:

Analogies could be cited to show that it is highly probable that at one time the ritual, the visible act of washing the hands, was believed to be the counterpart of an invisible taking away of transgression, i. e. a sacrament.⁷

While they say that analogies could be cited it is interesting to note that they do not do so.

Morgan is more correct on his position about the Levitical washings:

In the primitive stage of religious development the defilement or infection which the lustral bath was supposed to wash away was that resulting from contact with a person or object which, as charged with a noxious magic force or an evil spirit, was regarded as tabu- dangerous. The water was thought of as absorbing the infection, or as drawing out the evil spirit; or, again, cleansing from visible impurity was regarded as carrying with it by sympathetic magic cleansing from invisible. In the lustrations of the Levitical code the idea of tabu has been superseded by that of ceremonial uncleanness; and what was originally avoided as charged with a dangerous force-a dead body, a menstruous woman, swine's flesh-is now avoided because contact with it would render a man unfit to appear before God and to mingle with his fellow-worshippers. And in the case of defilement the efficacy of the lustral bath is no longer based on the magic virtue of the water, but on the fact that it is a divinely appointed means of purification.⁸

6 C. K. Barrett, The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition, p. 30.

7 W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box, The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue, p. 289.

8 W. Morgan, op. cit., p. 208.

Though there is evidence for a historical connection between John's rite and those of Levitical regulations, the full significance of the rite cannot be found there. Several differences are clearly apparent. These lustral acts were constantly repeated but the Johannine rite was a single act performed once. These acts were performed by each individual while John baptized with his own hands.⁹ The purpose of the lustral rites was to remove ceremonial defilement and to restore a man back to a normal position in the Jewish community, but John shifts to a new sphere—a sphere of preparation for the approaching kingdom of God. And finally, the lustral rites were ceremonial while John's baptism was charged with ethical meaning. A cleansing of heart from sin was its prerequisite and constant aim. For an explanation of these innovations in the Johannine rite the path of investigation will lead elsewhere in Judaism.

2. Prophetic Teachings of Lustrations.

The prophets ceased to regard ritual of any value. They held a new view toward lustrations as they did toward sacrifice. They fully recognized that the outward rite possessed no spiritual value in itself, but a purity of heart

⁹ There is some question as to whether John's rite was administered by him or whether he witnessed the baptism and the candidate baptized himself. This possibility will be considered later. Infra, pp.82ff.

was needed.¹⁰ In the great prophets the washing rites, which ceased to have any validity in themselves, appear as symbols of a cleansing of moral stains.¹¹ So it was probably through his prophetic lineage that John the Baptist gave to the rite of baptism a moral significance.¹² Kirsopp Lake¹³ thinks that the preaching of the Baptist is connected with the teaching of Ezekiel on repentance and purification by his announcement of a coming kingdom and offering a baptism of purification from sin in combination with the message of repentance. In support of this view he cites Ezekiel 36:25. This reference along with others mentioned above shows that a moral transformation is in question and not merely an actual physical bath.

John who was the first prophet in Israel from the time of Malachi was proclaimed by Jesus as the greatest of all prophets in Matthew 11:9. Naturally, being in the prophetic line he would use a symbol that would have a connection with a moral transformation of the people. It is not unreasonable to say that John was no doubt indebted to the great prophets for the ethical meaning which he attached to his baptism.

10 Hosea 6:6; Isaiah 1:11-17; Psalms 51:17.

11 Isaiah 1:16; 4:4; Jeremiah 4:14; 33:8; Ezekiel 36:25; Zechariah 13:1; Psalms 51:7.

12 W. Morgan, op. cit., p. 209.

13 K. Lake, Earlier Epistles of St. Paul, p. 399f.

Knox, in treating the symbolical interpretation of the lustration rites by the prophets, concludes:

Although the original purpose of the levitical washings was the removal of ceremonial defilement, it was natural that they should be regarded as a symbol of the moral conversion necessary for all true religion, and this symbolical interpretation is as old as Isaiah.... Thus there is no justification for going outside conventional Jewish ideas for an explanation of the reasons which led the Baptist to regard a ceremonial washing as a suitable form of admission to his new community of those who by repentance sought to save themselves from the general judgment of all mankind, the imminence of which he had been sent to proclaim.¹⁴

However, there are certain other characteristics of John's baptism that still remain unsolved. For that reason an explanation will be sought in another rite of Judaism.

3. Proselyte Baptism.

An antecedent for John's baptism is sought in the lustral rites of Judaism that is not repeated but is an act which is performed once for all. Such an act is found in the טַבַּח לַיָּתוּבִים "proselyte bath." Proselyte baptism was administered to Gentiles who desired to embrace Judaism. For a male Gentile to enter the Jewish communion he was required to submit to מילה (circumcision), טַבַּח (a bath), and to offer קֶרֶבן אֶתְּנָהּ (a sacrifice, literally, a gracious acceptance of blood).¹⁵

In the case of women their acceptance was contingent upon

¹⁴ W. L. Knox, op. cit., p. 18, n. 25.

¹⁵ Emil Schürer, A History of the Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 319.

the last two requirements. When the Temple was destroyed in 70 A. D., then the tebilah becomes the only requirement of acceptance for women proselytes.

At one time the view prevailed among some scholars¹⁶ that proselyte baptism was not observed during the time of John but originated after the fall of Jerusalem and was adopted as a rite of initiation of the Gentiles into the Jewish community in the place of the Temple sacrifices which passed away with the destruction of the Temple. Since the time of Schürer¹⁷ and Edersheim¹⁸ the opinion of scholarship has changed because of their excellent contributions in this field of study. It is now admitted by the majority of scholars¹⁹ that there is no reason to doubt that proselyte baptism existed in the time of the Baptist and was a part of Jewish propaganda from early days.

16 Heinrich Ewald, The History of Israel, Vol. VIII, pp. 121f; Shneckenburger, Ueber das Alter der jüdischen Proselyten-Taufe, pp. 4-32. Cf. Schürer, op. cit., II, ii, p. 321, n. 302 for list of those for and opposed to early date of proselyte baptism.

17 Schürer, op. cit., II, ii, pp. 319ff.

18 A. Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. II, pp. 745 ff.

19 I Abrahams, Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, 1st Series, pp. 36-46; Schürer, op. cit., II, ii, pp. 319ff; Edersheim, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 745ff; W. Brandt, op. cit., pp. 58ff also "Baptism" (Jewish), E. R. E., Vol. II, pp. 408-409; H. H. Rowley, "Jewish Proselyte Baptism and the Baptism of John," H. U. C. A., Vol. XV, 1940, pp. 313-334; F. Gavin, The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments, p. 31; Oepke, op. cit., T. W. N. T., Vol. I, p. 533; H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament, Vol. I, pp. 102ff; J. Bonsirven, Le Judaïsme Palestinien, Vol. I, p. 30f; et al.

The objections raised against proselyte baptism as being antecedent to the Johannine rite are based largely upon the argument from silence. It is pointed out that the rite was not mentioned in the Old Testament, The Apocrypha, Philo, and Josephus. They also say that in view of the prominence given to baptism in the New Testament in reference to John's rite and that practised by the Christians it seems strange that there is no reference to proselyte baptism if it had been the custom of those days. Zeitlin²⁰ refers to the account given in Josephus concerning the conversion of Izates, King of Adiabene. In this incident Eleazar reproached the king for not submitting to the rite of circumcision. On the basis of this Zeitlin claims that had baptism been required of proselytes at this early time, then Josephus would not have been silent on it here. But this is no conclusive evidence to negate the early practice of the proselyte bath in Judaism, because it may be quite possible that the silence of such a rite in the above works is due to the lack of an occasion to mention it.²¹

It is further objected that there is no contemporary evidence for proselyte baptism antecedent to the Johannine rite. This is very true, but while there is no clear evidence

20 S. Zeitlin, "The Halaka in the Gospels and Its Relation to the Jewish Law at the Time of Jesus," H. U. C. A., Vol. I, 1924, p. 359.

21 A. H. McNeile, The Gospel According to St. Matthew, p. 33, n. 1.

for a date prior to the Baptist, it seems highly improbable that Judaism would have adopted a practice which was already a characteristic rite of Christians whom they regarded as their enemies.²² Even as early as 1726 Calmet²³ pointed out the improbability of the adoption of the Christian rite of baptism by the Jews. Zeitlin,²⁴ who holds that the Gentiles were not considered unclean until 65 A. D. and consequently believes that only then did baptism become the sine qua non for entering the Jewish community, suggests on the contrary that the Christians borrowed the rite from the Jews after 65 A. D. By holding to this position he naturally ignores the baptism which John proclaimed and to which even Josephus is a witness. Buchler²⁵ submits sufficient evidence to discount the view of Zeitlin and claims by his evidence the year 17-18 A. D. as the year when the Gentiles were considered

22 Rowley, op. cit., p. 313.

23 A. Calmet, Commentaire litteral sur tous les livres de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament, Vol. VII, p. 288
 "Quelques-uns ont cru que les Juifs avoient imité cette cérémonie des Païens ... ou des Chrétiens ... Mais les Païens et les Chrétiens étoient trop odieux aux Juifs, pour croire que ceux-ci ayent voulu les imiter en cela."

24 Zeitlin, op. cit., p. 361.

25 A. Buchler, "The Levitical Impurity of the Gentiles in Palestine Before the Year 70," J. Q. R., Vol. 17, 1926-27, p. 15, n. 26.

unclean.

The actual date of the beginning of the proselyte tebilah is unknown. However, there is evidence which is cumulative in its effect to establish the date of the practice before the days of John the Baptist. The first evidence usually given in the defense of an early date is the celebrated passage from Arrian,²⁶ the historian who records the conversations of Epictetus, the Stoic philosopher who taught in Rome until 94 A. D. In this passage it seems that Epictetus as early as the latter half of the first century A. D. had some knowledge of the Jewish practice of baptism. However, Reitzenstein²⁷ refuses to see in this an allusion to proselyte baptism. Schürer²⁸ on the contrary thinks that it cannot be understood apart from a reference to proselyte baptism. The opinion of scholars is in agreement with Schürer.

26 Dissertations of Epictetus, 2.9.20 text in Loeb-Classical Library.

οὐχ ὁρᾷς; πῶς ἑκαστος λέγεται Ἰουδαῖος; πῶς Σύρος; πῶς Αἰγύπτιος; καὶ ὅταν τινὰ ἐπαμφοτερίζοντα ἴδωμεν, εἰώθαμεν λέγειν "οὐκ ἔστιν Ἰουδαῖος; ἀλλ' ὑποκρίνεται." ὅταν δ' ἀναλάβῃ τὸ πάθος τὸ τοῦ βεβαμμένου καὶ ἡρημένου, τότε καὶ ἔστι τῷ ὄντι καὶ καλεῖται Ἰουδαῖος.

27 Reitzenstein, op. cit., pp. 232-234; also W. A. Oldfather, translator of Epictetus in Loeb-Classical Library edition, in commenting on the baptism of a Jew in this passage says, "It would appear that Epictetus is here speaking really of the Christians, who were in his time infrequently confused with the Jews." Vol. I, p. 272, n. 1.

28 Schürer, op. cit., II, ii, pp. 322f.

In the Sibylline Oracles,²⁹ the Jewish origin of which is at least probable, there is an insistence upon converted Gentiles being baptized as an outward token of their conversion. This document is usually dated around 80 A. D.³⁰ Here, again, the baptism of proselytes seems to be a recognized rite of Judaism. It should also be noted that in this passage there is a connection between baptism, repentance and forgiveness.

Others have used as evidence for an early date of the proselyte tebilah the Ethiopic version of Matthew 23:15 "Ye compass sea and land to baptize one proselyte" or the statement of Paul in I Corinthians 10:1f "Our fathers ... were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The first need not be considered as having any weight. Jeremias³¹ thinks that the text of Paul, however, proves the dependence of John's rite on proselyte baptism. There is no question concerning

29 C. Alexandre, Oracula Sibyllina, IV.164f: ἐν ποταμοῖς λούσασθε ὅλον δέμας ἀενάοισιν, χειρὰς τ' ἐκτανύσαντες ἐς αἰθέρα τῶν πάρος ἔργων συγγνώμην αἰτεῖσθε καὶ εὐλογίαις ἀσέβειαν πιπρὰν ἱλάσσεσθε. θεὸς δώσει μετάνοιαν οὐδὲ ὀλέσει.

30 Abrahams, op. cit., p. 39; K. Lake, The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul, p. 26, n. 1 places the fourth book of the Sibyl at 79-90 A. D.

31 J. Jeremias, "Der Ursprung der Johannestaufe," Z. N. T. W., Vol. 28, 1929, pp. 312-320.

Paul's dependence here on the Rabbinic tradition, but surely this is no witness for the existence of proselyte baptism.³²

Evidence which is more convincing comes from Rabbinical sources which were compiled in the second century but doubtless reflect traditions that were held to have come from a much earlier period. The earliest Rabbinic witness to proselyte baptism is found in the record of a dispute between the schools of Hillel and Shammai.³³ Abrahams³⁴ attaches great importance to this passage that describes a difference of opinion between the schools of Hillel and Shammai over whether a man who had been made a proselyte on the fourteenth of Nisan and had been baptized was to wait seven days before he was considered as clean or may he eat the Paschal lamb on the same evening. This debate implies that the baptism of proselytes occurred during the time the Paschal lamb was still being offered and this would indicate a time before the Temple was destroyed. Moore³⁵ thinks that the above passage does not furnish evidence that is conclusive for a time as early as the ministry of John the Baptist but does carry the rite back to a time prior to the

32 Cf. Thomas, op. cit., p. 364 who says "Paul dépend donc, en un certain sens, de la tradition rabbinique, mais il n'est pas un témoin de l'existence du baptême des prosélytes."

33 Pesahim VIII, 8 and parallel Eduyoth V, 2 in H. Danby, The Mishnah, pp. 148, 431.

34 Abrahams, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

35 G. F. Moore, Judaism, Vol. III, p. 110, n. 102.

fall of Jerusalem. Graetz holds that the date for this evidence is 67 A. D.³⁶

Abrahams³⁷ turns to the Jerusalem Talmud³⁸ and the Tosefta³⁹ and cites evidence to substantiate his argument for the baptism of proselytes during Temple times. Here are references to the baptism of some Roman soldiers immediately following their conversion on the same day. However, this only carries one back to a time prior to 70 A. D. Rowley thinks that this evidence is less conclusive than would appear since it is not possible to tell whether a ritual lustration or a witnessed ceremony is mentioned since there is no distinction in the Hebrew between "bath" and "baptism."⁴⁰ Rowley holds that the reference is probably that of "baptism."

The Babylonian Talmud⁴¹ contains a reference to proselyte baptism which helps to establish an early date for the rite. The passage tells about a difference of opinion between Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah and Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, who lived towards the end of the first century A. D., concerning whether

36 Cited in Abrahams, op. cit., p. 37.

37 Ibid., p. 37.

38 Pesahim, VIII.

39 Pesahim VII, 13.

40 Op. cit., H. U. C. A. XV, p. 317.

41 Yebamoth, 46a.

circumcision without baptism sufficed to make one a proselyte.

On this passage Gavin remarks:

That it could be a matter of debate by the end of the first century suggests definitely that it had been a long prevailing practice, and the incident alluded to in Pes. VIII, 8 reinforces the inference of proscriptive use of a much earlier date.⁴²

But even apart from any explicit evidence one would naturally assume that the rites for admission of proselytes were currently practised in the time of Christ. If the Jew was compelled to wash for ceremonial purity frequently, then the Gentile who came into Judaism would need a bath more so in the eyes of the Jews because his whole life was one of pollution. A fuller testimony of the character of proselyte baptism is found in passages which cannot be dated. It is from these sources that the significance and the mode of the rite will be treated.

a. The Significance of proselyte baptism. Without a doubt the origin of the ceremony lies within the sphere of ritual impurity and uncleanness. If the Jew was required to submit to Levitical lustrations to be clean in his religious life, so also it was necessary for the Gentile coming into Judaism from impure heathenism to get rid of the taint of his former manner of living by a similar bath.⁴³ Carrington says that the

42 F. Gavin, Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments, p. 31.

43 Kaufman Kohler, "Proselyte Baptism," Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 500; Rowley, "The Origin and Meaning of Baptism," The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. XI, 1942-45, p. 310; Barrett, op. cit., p. 31.

proselyte bath probably was derived from the *tebilah* of Leviticus 17:15.⁴⁴

What is the meaning of the proselyte bath? Was it merely a bath to remove ceremonial defilement? Was it just an initiatory rite for the Gentile to pass from heathenism into Judaism? Or was there some additional meaning involved in the submission to the bath? It is clear from the Talmudic evidence that it is something deeper than physical purification.

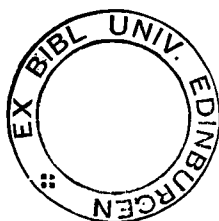
Rowley maintains that there was a sacramental character attached to proselyte baptism.⁴⁵ His reason for making this statement is based on the requirement of the presence of witnesses for the proselyte *tebilah* as over against the other lustrations which were private rites. Rowley in his use of the term "sacramental" does not mean that the immersion act mediated grace to the proselyte apart from the spiritual state of the person immersed, but the Jews believed "that the act of immersion mediated grace to the true proselyte."⁴⁶ It was essential that the proselyte act from pure motives and be in a spiritual state before there could be a valid performance of the rite.

Though proselyte baptism did not possess a sacramental

⁴⁴ P. Carrington, The Primitive Christian Catechism, p. 14.

⁴⁵ Rowley, op. cit., H. U. C. A., XV, p. 327.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 328.



meaning in the sense that Bousset⁴⁷ opposes and Oesterley and Box⁴⁸ find in other Jewish lustral rites, it was regarded more than a ritual purification and an empty form required for conformity to a regulation. It was an act of dedication to the God of Israel, involving spiritual factors as well as physical.⁴⁹ Rabbi Jose quotes, "a proselyte who embraces Judaism is like a new-born child."⁵⁰ In commenting on this quotation Taylor says, "The proselyte on his conversion was, as it were, regenerated. He passed over into a new sphere of being, and all his former relationships at once ceased and determined."⁵¹

b. The mode of proselyte baptism. That complete nudity and complete immersion were required in the proselyte bath is beyond question. It was essential that all parts of the body be covered with water. Taylor says that "a ring on the finger, a band confining the hair, or anything that in the least degree broke the continuity of contact with the water,

47 W. Bousset, Die Religion des judentums im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter, p. 230.

48 W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box, The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue, p. 286.

49 Brandt, op. cit., E. R. E., Vol. II, p. 408; Abrahams, op. cit., p. 42; Rowley, op. cit., H. U. C. A., XV, p. 327.

50 Babylonian Talmud, Yebamoth 22a and 48b.

51 C. Taylor, The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles, p. 58.

was held to invalidate the act."⁵² The immersion of a proselyte was to conform to the same standard of completeness as the immersion of a woman after menstruation.⁵³

On the principle that every part of the body was to be touched by water, it is incredible that the rite was administered by an agent. Proselyte baptism was a self-administered rite in the presence of witnesses.⁵⁴ In only one case did a bystander participate actively in the ceremony. On entering Jewish service a pagan slave was baptized. If he claimed that such baptism was for complete proselytism he became free. To make it clear that the baptism was not for this purpose, the owner of the slave was to seize him in the water as a clear indication the baptism was not for complete proselytism.⁵⁵

4. The Baptism of the Essenes.

From Josephus⁵⁶ one learns that the Essenes practised a daily purification by bathing in cold water. However, it is hardly possible that John was indebted to the Essenes for his

52 Ibid., p. 52. Cf. Danby, The Mishnah, Mikwaoth, 9:1-4, pp. 742f.

53 Babylonian Talmud, Yebamoth 47b.

54 Ibid., 47b. There is difference of opinions on the number of witnesses. Some Rabbis say two and others three.

55 Ibid., 46a.

56 Josephus, Jewish Wars, ii.8.5.

ideas for baptism since he did not share with them in their other ideas. There are no serious advocates today who would hold that the Baptist had any sort of connection with the Essenes. Loisy maintains that John was an ascetic but did not belong to the Essenes.⁵⁷ "It has become a common practice with a certain class of writers," says Lightfoot, "to call Essenism to their aid in accounting for any distinctive features of Christianity, which they are unable to explain in any other way."⁵⁸

57 Loisy, Birth of the Christian Religion, p. 66.

58 J. B. Lightfoot, The Epistles of Paul - Colossians and Philemon, p. 395.

Chapter IV

THE JOHANNINE RITE

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Still seeking light on the origin of Christian baptism, it is only logical now to turn and consider the baptism of John, the man whom the Church from the beginning recognized as the precursor of Jesus. Though there were many ceremonial washings in Judaism as has already been noted, the practice of John was felt to be something that was peculiar in nature. He made baptism so central and its features were so different that he received the appellation of "the Baptizer."¹ Presumably, John's great mission of repentance and baptism was based upon the prophetic anticipation of a national washing or purification before the coming of the Messianic era.

The baptism which Jesus in all probability commanded² must certainly be interpreted in the light of John's rite with which His disciples were acquainted. However, this baptism has its roots in a remote past and receives its proper meaning only in connection with the rites of Judaism. It is very obvious, as will be immediately shown, that he gave it a greater meaning, but "it is plain that under his

¹ J. C. Lambert, op. cit., p. 55; McNeile, op. cit., p. 33, n. 1; O. H. Holtzmann, The Life of Jesus, p. 119; Mark 6: 14, 24; Matthew 3:1; Mark 8:22; Luke 7:20.

² Supra, pp. 21ff.

baptismal doctrine he subsumed ideas which were already present in the minds of those who heard him."³

In the Levitical lustrations most assuredly John's baptism finds its earliest historical connection, but this is in no way a full explanation. A somewhat closer connection is seen in the use of water by the prophets.⁴ The prophets employ the metaphor of washing not infrequently to represent ethical purification. Perhaps the closest prototype of John's meaning of baptism from the prophets is found in Ezekiel 36:25f. It is readily noticed that there are similarities between John's baptism and that of the proselytes. Both were complete immersions and performed once for all. Both symbolised a change of heart and a self-dedication to a new way of life.⁵ There is no particular reason for denying the indebtedness of John to proselyte baptism as some scholars⁶ have done, nor is there any necessity to minimize the real difference between John's baptism and the proselyte bath.⁷ Furthermore, it is

3 Lambert, op. cit., p. 55f.

4 Isaiah 1:16; Jeremiah 4:14; Psalms 51:4; Isaiah 4:4; Ezekiel 36:25.

5 Rowley, op. cit., p. 334; J. Leipoldt, Die urchristliche Taufe im Lichte der Religionsgeschichte, pp. 18-23; G. F. Moore, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 335.

6 Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 112ff says "Dagegen haben inhaltlich die beiden Riten nichts miteinander gemein;" also Lietzmann, op. cit., p. 51.

7 Leipoldt, op. cit., p. 27 feels that the rites are so similar that John's rite is a special kind of proselyte baptism. "Die Taufe des Johannes ist danach eine Art Proselytentaufe."

unnecessary to depreciate proselyte baptism by labelling it as void of all moral and ethical connotations in order to bolster the greatness of the Johannine rite.⁸

Though there are some similarities between John's baptism and the proselyte bath, there are also some fundamental differences which should be noted. The baptism of John was administered in public but the proselyte baptism took place in the presence of at least two or three witnesses and there is nothing to suggest its being a public ceremony. John's rite symbolized a change of life and not a change of creed. For that reason it could be administered to both Jew and Gentile alike. It is further noted that John's baptism was an eschatological rite. A new age was about to dawn. While the proselyte was baptized to be admitted into an existing society, the baptism of John aimed to prepare them for a new society.⁹

1. Sources of Knowledge of John's Baptism.

There are just two primary sources that are recognized as giving a trustworthy picture of John's baptism. In addition to the numerous references in the New Testament there is also

⁸ A. Plummer, "Baptism," H. D. B., Vol. I, p. 240; Schürer, op. cit., II, ii, p. 324n; and Armitage Robinson, "Baptism," Encyclopedia Biblica, Vol. I, col. 472; all hold that proselyte baptism was just physical purification.

⁹ Rowley, op. cit., p. 334.

the account given by Josephus. It has been held by some that the Slavonic version of The Jewish War,¹⁰ the Mandaean,¹¹ and certain Apocryphal¹² and Sub-Apostolic¹³ literature are all valuable as evidence for the Johannine rite. However, all of these can be shown to be secondary witnesses and of no real value in discovering the meaning of John's baptism.¹⁴

a. The testimony of Josephus modifies to a certain extent the traditional picture of John's baptism. After Josephus has described the defeat of Herod's army by Aretas, King of Arabia, he continues:

But some of the Jews were of the opinion that Herod's army had been destroyed by God, and that quite justly as punishment for his treatment of John who was surnamed Baptist. For this good man was put to death by Herod. He bade the Jews practice virtue and behave righteously towards one another and piously towards God and come together in baptism βαπτισμῷ συνιέναι. For thus the immersion τὴν βάπτισιν would be acceptable to him, if they employed it not as a means of seeking pardon for particular sins but as a means of purifying the body, providing that the soul had been thoroughly cleansed beforehand by righteousness. When people flocked around

10 Robert Eisler, The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist, pp. 223ff; Vide Appendix A for a discussion of Eisler's theory.

11 Supra, pp. 32ff.

12 Book of James, or Protoevangelium, XXII-XXV; Acts of Pilate, III; Book of John the Evangelist; and Apocalypse of Paul, 51. All found in M. R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament, pp. 48, 125ff, 191, 554.

13 Clementine Homilies, II, 23-24; Eusebius, H. E., I. 2.

14 Cf. Barrett, op. cit., p. 26; H. A. Guy, New Testament Prophecy, pp. 37-41, 159-169; G. H. C. MacGregor, "John the Baptist and the Origins of Christianity," The Expository Times, Vol. 46, 1934-35, pp. 335-358.

him since they took great delight in listening to what he said, Herod, afraid lest the great power of John had of persuading men might incite them to a rebellion (for they seemed ready to follow his advice in everything), thought it far better to take the initiative and put him to death before he caused any fresh disturbance, lest, if a riot actually took place, he might himself be involved in trouble and have cause to regret it. Thus John, a prisoner thanks to Herod's suspicion of him, was sent to Machaerus the fortress previously mentioned and there executed. The Jews thought that it was in revenge for him that destruction came upon the army, since God willed that Herod should be punished.¹⁵

It has been held that this account in Josephus is a Christian interpolation into the original text. This seems very unlikely, because a Christian interpolation would have followed the New Testament account more closely. A Christian interpolator would have related John with Jesus at this point and the silence in this case "of itself is almost enough to authenticate the passage."¹⁶ It is noticeable that Josephus uses the terms βαπτισμός which occurs only a few times in the New Testament¹⁷ and βάπτισις which occurs nowhere in the New Testament. He never uses the characteristic βάπτισμα, the word used in the New Testament for John's rite.

In the testimony of Josephus there are some significant divergences from the narratives of John's baptism in the New Testament, but for the most part there is agreement. Josephus

15 Antiquities, 18.5.2.

16 I. Abrahams, op. cit., p. 31.

17 Mark 7:4; Hebrews 6:2; 9:10. (Nowhere in connection with John's baptism.)

agrees with the New Testament account that John was killed by Herod, though they differ on the reasons for his death.¹⁸ In Josephus the eschatological element in John's teaching is removed and there is no reference to a coming of judgment or wrath nor a mightier successor, but John seems to be looked upon as a teacher of moral truths. John's rite presented in the New Testament is one that is characterized by a "baptism of repentance unto remission of sins" while Josephus looks upon it as bordering on an ascetic rite of bodily purity. It is possible to look upon the contents of John's preaching "as a specimen of his exhortation of men to 'virtue',"¹⁹ but perhaps Marsh goes a little too far in saying that the account of Josephus is "an excellent summary of the Baptist's message as presented in the Gospels."²⁰

Marsh²¹ suggests three possible reasons for the difference discovered in the testimony of Josephus and the New Testament over the Johannine rite. One possibility is the deliberate misinterpretation of John by Josephus. Josephus was truly capable of such. Another possibility is a sincere

¹⁸ Josephus says that Herod feared lest John would lead a revolt, but the Gospels indicate personal reasons for his death.

¹⁹ Guy, op. cit., p. 39.

²⁰ H. G. Marsh, The Origin and Significance of New Testament Baptism, p. 50.

²¹ Ibid., p. 50.

misunderstanding of the meaning of John's baptism since he was acquainted with the daily baths of Banus, the ascetic and perhaps regarded the rite as similar to that of Banus or the Essenes. A third suggestion, which in reality comes from Abrahams,²² is that Josephus preserves the exact nature of the rite. He concludes that Josephus clearly means to identify John with the sect of the Essenes.²³ "But Josephus does not otherwise hint at the identification," says Creed, "and had he regarded John as an Essene, there seems no reason why he should not have said so directly."²⁴

In all probability the misrepresentation of John's rite by Josephus was intentional.²⁵ Perhaps he altered the eschatological meaning of John's baptism and presented "it in the guise of an ascetic rite in the hope that his account would thereby be rendered more acceptable to Gentile readers."²⁶ Goguel²⁷ thinks that this incorrect presentation of John's baptism is due more to the historian's purpose to remain

22 Op. cit., p. 34.

23 Ibid., p. 34.

24 J. M. Creed, The Gospel According to St. Luke, p. 312, n. 1.

25 Ibid., p. 312; Flemington, op. cit., p. 24; M. Goguel, Life of Jesus, p. 266.

26 Flemington, op. cit., p. 24.

27 Op. cit., p. 266; also MacGregor, op. cit., p. 356.

silent on the subject of Messianism than his ignorance of the facts. Furthermore, if the movement of John the Baptist was as Josephus stated it, then it is hard to explain the fear of political dangers in the mind of Herod with reference to John.²⁸ Yet on the other hand, if John proclaimed the "Reign of God" and the end of the present order with apocalyptic fervor as the Gospels so portray, then he may have been regarded by Herod as a dangerous revolutionary.²⁹ The Hellenistic readers of Josephus would not have understood him had he used anything that bespoke Jewish nationalism and if they had understood they would have most assuredly disapproved. Barrett aptly sums up the account of Josephus in this fashion:

It is plain that the whole of Josephus' account of John is only precariously held together, and it is not easy to understand; the reason is that Josephus has taken away the keystone of the arch, the clue to the puzzle.³⁰

b. The second source of the knowledge of John's rite is found in the New Testament. Mark, after an introduction by the quotation of Scripture from Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3, begins his Gospel with the baptism practised and proclaimed by John. The Marcan material is followed by Q (Matthew 3:1ff

28 Creed, op. cit., p. 313.

29 Ibid., p. 312; Flemington, op. cit., p. 24.

30 Op. cit., p. 28.

and Luke 3:4ff) with certain variations and an addition to both Marcan and Q material by Luke on the practical advice of John which was concerned with questions of conduct.³¹ The Fourth Gospel writer seems to follow independent material in his narrative on John's baptism.³² There are several references to John's baptism found in Acts,³³ though it is interesting to note that Paul never refers to John. This does not mean that he does not look upon him as being in the Christian tradition, because doubtless he was acquainted with the significance of John's baptism in his experience at Ephesus.³⁴

Numerous references³⁵ to John are found in the New Testament which are sufficient to indicate that he was of great importance and had an abiding influence on the Christian tradition. Without a doubt John's movement was considered in certain respects an embarrassment to the early Church because Jesus had submitted to John's rite of baptism and if it could have been possible the Evangelists would have omitted John

31 Luke 3:11ff.

32 John 1:15-34.

33 Acts 1:5; 1:22; 10:37; 13:24-25.

34 Acts 19:1ff.

35 Mark 1:2-11, 14; 2:18; 6:14-29; 11:30-33; Matthew 3:7-17; 11:2-19; Luke 1:5ff; 3:3-22; 7:18-27, 31-35; 16:16; John 1:19-42; 3:22-36; 4:1-3; Acts 1:5, 22; 10:37; 13:24-25.

from their narratives. These references to John present biographical material that is extremely helpful in understanding the meaning of John's baptism. From these can be gleaned enough material to present a satisfactory picture of the Baptist.

The general impression from the material found in the New Testament leaves one with the opinion that John was a prophet. His contemporaries believed that he was a prophet,³⁶ or otherwise his baptism would have been valueless. In John once again the "Word of Yahweh" came to the people. In the opinion of Jesus John was more than a prophet.³⁷

The soul of Israel was stirred to its depths by John. He came clad as a prophet.³⁸ Like Elijah he wore a rough mantle of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins. His food was desert produced such as locusts and wild honey. Parallel with the feeling that the Messiah was to come was the anticipation that a great prophet was first to return to get ready for the coming of the Lord. This prophet was to be mighty in power in leading in the preparation. He could be none less than Elijah as depicted in Malachi 4:5. Several Jewish sources in Rabbinical literature reveal an expectation

36 Mark 11:32.

37 Matthew 11:9 and Luke 7:26.

38 Zechariah 13:4 and II Kings 1:8.

of the return of Elijah before the advent of the Messiah.³⁹ In the New Testament this expectation is considered as realized in John the Baptist. In the opening verse of Mark it is implied by the quotation from Malachi 3:1. Later on in Mark 9:11-13 this is more explicitly stated.⁴⁰ In the Lucan infancy stories John is related to Elijah.⁴¹

Guy⁴² points out that there are two aspects of John's life that link him with Old Testament prophetism. One aspect is the denunciation of Herod which recalls the appearance of Nathan before David⁴³ and Elijah when he confronted Ahab.⁴⁴ In another way John is connected with late writing prophets with the kernel of his teaching being the wrath of God.⁴⁵ By this he reminds one of Amos on the Day of Yahweh as being a day of darkness and not light.

A demand for repentance in view of approaching judgment and a prediction of the Coming One are the two distinctive elements in the message of John.⁴⁶ Both of these elements are

39 Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 779-798.

40 Vide also Matthew 11:9-14 and Luke 7:26.

41 Luke 1:13-17.

42 Op. cit., pp. 42f.

43 II Samuel 12:1ff.

44 I Kings 21:17ff.

45 Matthew 3:7f and Luke 3:7f.

46 Barrett, op. cit., p. 29.

related to John's rite of baptism as Barrett so aptly says:

The repentance which he required in view of the judgment which he proclaimed to be immediately at hand was to be sealed by the act of baptism. But the prophecy of the One who was to come was also conceived in terms of baptism, and the difference between his baptism and that of John was the measure of his superiority to the forerunner.⁴⁷

John makes τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς ⁴⁸ the kernel of his warning to the people in preparing them for the Coming One. He anticipated a sudden judgment about to be demonstrated on all the wicked, Jew and Gentile alike, with the advent of the Messiah. John does not share in the "weird flights of fancy with which the contemporary apocalyptic writers depicted the coming of the Day of the Lord."⁴⁹ There is a fundamental difference between John's view of judgment and that expressed by the apocalyptists. The opinion of the apocalyptists was that the day of the Lord would be a time of the vindication of Israel and the destruction of the Gentiles. John shows that "the wrath" was a threat to both Jews and Gentiles. Believing that a great crisis was imminent, he desired to prepare men for it by awakening them to repentance.

Though John was from a sacerdotal family, there is no

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 29f.

⁴⁸ Luke 3:7 and Matthew 3:7.

⁴⁹ Guy, op. cit., p. 43. For this same view cf. E. F. Scott, The Kingdom and the Messiah, p. 68f; also H. Lietzmann, The Beginnings of the Christian Church, p. 50.

incident in his life to suggest that he had any positive or negative concern for the Temple or ritual worship. There is the suggestion by Guy⁵⁰ that in John there is a combination of ritualism and prophetic symbolism. He believes that it was possibly due to his practice of baptism that the Sadducees, according to the account given by Matthew, came to investigate his work. They would have ignored an ethical teacher, but a prophet with a ritual was something to command their attention. It is more in keeping with the attitude of the Sadducees to credit their visit to John as a fear of his movement.

2. The Significance of John's Baptism.

What was the meaning of the baptism proclaimed and practised by John? What position did the rite occupy in his ministry of preaching? The title that John received of ὁ βαπτιστής and ὁ βαπτίζων is sufficient evidence to indicate that his baptism was exceptional and was not to be equated with the ordinary contemporary purification rites of the Jews.

a. First and foremost the baptism of John is to be regarded as an eschatological rite.⁵¹ The burden of John's message was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near" (Matthew 3:2). John had an overwhelming sense of the

⁵⁰ Op. cit., pp. 46f.

⁵¹ P. Volz, Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments, pp. 356f; A. Schweitzer, Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, p. 233; Barrett, op. cit., p. 33, et al.

nearness of divine judgment. He came as a herald of the kingdom of God and had as his great task the preparation of men for it. God went about to act on those who did not repent and on those who did. In the first case it would be judgment and in the second it would be salvation. The axe was laid at the foot of the tree and all men were to prepare for the judgment by turning to God from sin and possess a change of heart and life. The prophetic symbolism of this changed life was the rite of baptism. The only Israel that could meet God was one cleansed from sin. In this John is akin to Ezekiel⁵² who uses water as a symbol of a great purification that is to transform the nation by a transformation of its heart.⁵³ Headlam in summing up the message of the Baptist says:

Its essence lay, not in looking for or in revealing strange mysteries, but rather in the renewed conception of the righteousness of God, and in the preparation for the judgment, the kingdom, and the Messiah by leading a righteous life and the cleansing from sin.⁵⁴

While Goguel says that John's rite is one of purification as the other Jewish ablutions he says "it is also a rite of admission, which constituted a veritable confraternity of

52 Ezekiel 9:4-11; 36:25f.

53 C. A. Briggs, Messianic Prophecy, p. 275.

54 A. C. Headlam, Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ, p. 165.

penitents, who were waiting and preparing for the Kingdom of God."⁵⁵ Barrett says that the motivation of John's baptism lies "in the eschatological necessity by which he was impelled to his prophetic ministry, his conviction, that is, that the remaining period of world history was short."⁵⁶ Some have emphasized the eschatological element in John's baptism and others have drawn the ethical element into the forefront of his rite, but Duncan brings the two together:

It is a dilemma which can only be resolved, in the one case as in the other, by a clear perception of what eschatology implies, and of the right relation between eschatology and ethics. Eschatological preaching does not limit itself to a feverish proclamation of coming judgment; it confronts men with the living God and summons them to live as in His presence.⁵⁷

Real eschatological preaching is ethical and there is hardly any effective ethical preaching apart from eschatology.

It is impossible to reconstruct the complete pattern of John's eschatology, but whatever his views were he surely looked upon himself as a herald of a new age.⁵⁸ John placed before his audience the demand of an amendment of life and made it the sine qua non for those who sought his baptism.

55 Maurice Goguel, Life of Jesus, p. 268.

56 Op. cit., p. 33.

57 George Duncan, Jesus, Son of Man, p. 78.

58 Marsh, op. cit., p. 27.

b. John's baptism is presented as provisional. The Gospels attempt to make John decry his baptism from the very outset by presenting it as preparatory, provisional, and promissory. His baptism is to be superseded by another baptism and there seems to be a contrast between his imperfect baptism on the one hand and the perfect baptism of the primitive Church on the other. It also seems that the meaning and value of John's baptism is determined to some extent by its relationship with the Spirit baptism of a later date. Schweitzer contends that there is no contrast suggested but that John's baptism has a causal connection with the Spirit baptism:

He is not contrasting the two baptisms, but connecting them - he who is baptized by him has the certainty that he will share in the outpouring of the Spirit which shall precede the judgment, and at the judgment shall receive forgiveness of sins, as one who is signed with the mark of repentance. The object of being baptized by him is to secure baptism with the Spirit later.⁵⁹

However, Schweitzer does not take into consideration Acts 19:1ff where Luke, who as most scholars hold wrote both the Gospel and Acts, definitely sees a contrast in the baptisms.

Many scholars⁶⁰ believe that John did not proclaim a

59 Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, p. 376f.

60 Goguel, Jean-Baptiste, p. 40; R. Bultmann, Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition, p. 116, n. 1; T. W. Manson, The Mission and Message of Jesus, p. 333; M. Dibelius, Die urchristliche Ueberlieferung von Johannes dem Tauffer, pp. 50, 56f; Creed, op. cit., p. 54; C. A. Briggs, The Messiah of the Gospels, p. 67; A. E. J. Rawlinson, St. Mark, Westminster Commentary, p. 8, n. 1; A. Loisy, B. C. R., pp. 65f; also Les Evangiles Synoptiques, Vol. I, 402.

coming baptism with the Holy Spirit, but only announced a baptism of fire and this fire was divine judgment. It is suggested that the tradition of the Baptist's saying about baptism with fire has been influenced by a tradition of a statement of Jesus about baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:5 and 11:16.⁶¹

In Mark and the Fourth Gospel the future baptism mentioned will be the baptism with the Holy Spirit:

Mark 1:8: ἐγὼ ἐβάπτισα ὑμᾶς ὕδατι, αὐτὸς δὲ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς πνεύματι ἁγίῳ

John 1:26, 33: ἐγὼ βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι... ὁ πέμφας με βαπτίζειν ἐν ὕδατι, ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν ἐφ' ὅν ἂν ἴδῃς τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον καὶ μένον ἐπ' αὐτόν, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ

Matthew and Luke who no doubt follow Q, a common source, have the Holy Spirit and fire:

Matthew 3:11: ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν· ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερος τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι· αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί.

Luke 3:16: ἐγὼ μὲν ὕδατι βαπτίζω ὑμᾶς ... αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί .

The Lewisian Syriac has the reverse order of fire and Holy Spirit. On the basis of the reverse order in the Lewisian Syriac Briggs holds that the Aramaic originally had fire and not Holy Spirit.⁶²

In Acts 19:1ff Paul confronts some disciples in Ephesus

⁶¹ Rawlinson, op. cit., p. 8, n. 1.

⁶² Briggs, Messiah and Gospels, p. 67.

who had received the baptism of John, but had never heard of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This seems strange, indeed, if John according to the Gospels taught that his own baptism was preliminary to another and that a higher baptism. Manson feels that one can freely say "that in Matthew and Mark we have the original form of the saying as recorded in Q plus the interpretation put upon it by the Church."⁶³ If the original text ran something like this αὐτὸς δὲ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς πυρί, then the sense of John's baptism was not preliminary to something better but the last chance to escape something worse, namely judgment. Barrett thinks that the saying in Luke and Matthew could have been "wind and fire." In this he is translating πνεύματι as "with wind" since wind and fire are both ideas of judgment.⁶⁴ He, himself admits there is little evidence for it because ἀγίω is omitted in only a few minuscule MSS.

John in being identified as Elijah, though in the Fourth Gospel he denied such identity,⁶⁵ would find a parallel teaching of fire and judgment related in the calling down of fire from heaven by Elijah in II Kings 1:10. In Malachi the messenger who is to come before the day of judgment is Elijah⁶⁶

⁶³ Manson, op. cit., p. 333.

⁶⁴ Op. cit., p. 125f.

⁶⁵ John 1:21.

⁶⁶ Malachi 4:5.

and this day will have a connection with "refiner's fire."⁶⁷ There are several references in the Old Testament where fire is connected with judgment.⁶⁸ Edersheim points out that the expression "baptism of fire" was not unknown to the Jews. He quotes from the last lines of Sanhedrin 39a to show an immersion of God in fire which is based on Isaiah 46:15.⁶⁹ The Sibyl said that if there was no repentance with baptism, then there would be a destruction by fire.⁷⁰

It seems then that John has connected the future baptism with a judgment of fire as the context of Matthew and Luke so clearly leads one to believe. Briggs so capably expresses it in this manner:

The judgment of fire, with its redemption of the people of God, is the theme of his preaching. Repentance and baptism with water are its preparations. The advent of God is connected, in the mind of the Baptist, with the advent of the Messiah. The Messiah comes to bestow his baptism of fire, and to exercise judgment. The Baptist seems to have in mind the advent of the Son of Man in the cloud with the Ancient of Days and the fiery stream of the Apocalypse of Daniel. The evangelists after the day of Pentecost see in the fire of the fiery tongues of the Holy Spirit as well as the fiery flame of the lake of fire of the judgment day.⁷¹

67 Malachi 3:2.

68 Amos 7:4; Malachi 3:2; Isaiah 31:9; 43:2.

69 Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 272. n. 6.

70 Sibylline Oracles IV, 70.

71 Briggs, Messiah and Gospels, p. 68; cf. Goguel, Jean-Baptiste, p. 40 "l'idée du jugement par le feu est courant dans l'apocalyptique judéo-chrétienne;" also O. Cullmann, Le Baptême des enfants et la doctrine biblique du baptême, p. 8 "La feu faisant sans doute allusion au jugement dernier."

c. Furthermore, John's baptism is one that is characterized by repentance. Though there is a moral quality connected with the tebilah of the proselytes, yet there is more of such in John's rite. A "baptism of repentance" was something new in Israel.⁷² It had never been proposed previously that Israel was to undergo such a baptism. Edersheim accounts for such a newness in John's baptism in this fashion:

As when the first Covenant was made, Moses was directed to prepare Israel by symbolic baptism of their persons and their garments, so the initiation of the new Covenant, by which the people were to enter into the Kingdom of God, was preceded by another general symbolic baptism of those who would be the true Israel, and receive, or take on themselves, the Law from God.⁷³

Duncan⁷⁴ points out that for the Israelite the word which is translated "repentance" is much more than the Greek idea of "change of mind." It means to turn to God with a desire to walk in His ways.

This call of John was a call for a fresh start in life. Those who confessed and repented in their sins, who changed their hearts and were baptized, would when the Messiah came have their sins forgiven and would be fit for the Messianic kingdom. "The immersion under water was called a baptism to

72 Edersheim, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 273; also W. Brandt, op. cit., p. 79 "Die Taufe τῆς μετανοίας war eine neue Erscheinung in jüdischen Baptismus."

73 Op. cit., p. 273.

74 Op. cit., p. 79; also Creed, op. cit., p. 50; For treatment of repentance see Appendix B.

repentance," says Wendt, "because the external ablution performed in acknowledgement of sin symbolically expressed the resolve after a moral purification of heart."⁷⁵

What is the connection between repentance and the forgiveness of sins that John also proclaimed? Does the qualifying expression εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν depend upon and qualify βάπτισμα or μετάνοια? Or is there a possibility that the expression is dependent upon both βάπτισμα and μετάνοια ? Carr⁷⁶ suggests that εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν is not dependent upon both βάπτισμα and μετάνοια separately "but it is quite possible to make it dependent on βάπτισμα μετανοίας taken together as one phrase." Mrs. Lewis⁷⁷ rejects this position of Carr and says that grammatically and logically εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν of Mark 1:4 and Luke is dependent on repentance and not baptism. It seems that Carr is more correct in taking εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν as being dependent on βάπτισμα μετανοίας taken as one phrase which would justify the translation "repentance baptism." The εἰς of the phrase points towards a forgiveness of sins which would come when the Messianic era would be ushered in. It does in no manner mean that sins are forgiven through baptism itself. If John's rite was proclaimed

75 Hans H. Wendt, The Teaching of Jesus, Vol. I, p. 86.

76 Arthur Carr, Horae Biblicae, p. 70.

77 Agnes Smith Lewis, "Did John Preach Baptism for the Remission of Sins?", Expositor, Vol. VII, 5th Series, 1898, pp. 223-227.

as having any power in forgiving sins, then he would have been challenged by the Jewish rulers even as Jesus was when He forgave sinners. Mrs. Lewis⁷⁸ suggests that ἀφεσιν be translated "forsaking."

In Luke's special material it is shown how repentance ought to work out in the details of everyday life.⁷⁹ Repentance is revealed by bringing fruits that answer to repentance. John's baptism was truly ethical in its nature. It was not a magical formula which would bring immunity from the effects of sin, but its value was dependent upon a clean heart. Volz⁸⁰ holds that it is an error when one supposes John has seen in the baptism a magic sacramental washing rite through which one has attained forgiveness of sins before the coming of judgment of wrath. He says that among the people the magic idea may have slipped in, but neither the baptism of John nor that commanded by Jesus have anything to do with magic. It may be that the reason the

78 Op. cit., p. 227; Cf. A. C. Deane, "The Ministry of John the Baptist," Expositor VIII 13, 1917, pp. 420-431. He says ἀφεσις means renunciation of sins by man not remission of sins by God. Cf. also A. Deissmann, Bible Studies, pp. 99-101. He says ἀφεσις conveys meaning of sluice or canal in papyri examples. It also has technical expression of "signal-year emancipation."

79 Luke 3:10-14.

80 Op. cit., p. 356; Cf. also W. Morgan, op. cit., p. 209; Angus, Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 149; C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, Vol. I, pp. 42f; Lietzmann, op. cit., p. 52; W. Bousset, Die Religion Des Judentums Im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter, p. 231.

Sadducees and Pharisees could not remain indifferent to John's rite was not due simply to its great publicity, but because they attributed some magical significance to the baptism which would afford security from the judgment of God.

Rudolph Otto finds in John's baptism "the sacrament of water baptism operating magically and ritualistically to wash away sinful matter."⁸¹ But there is no reason to assume that baptism was regarded as magical or a sacramental prophylactic by John. Montefiore is correct when he says "the baptism is to be the outward sign of an inward repentance, and this repentance is to lead to the forgiveness of sins."⁸²

d. A fourth characteristic of John's baptism is that it was universally needed. Though not explicitly stated, the universal demand for baptism by John is inferred from the Gospels. The Baptist removes the mask of racial pride and says that mere dependence on kinship with Abraham is not security.⁸³ He reminds one of Amos in this respect. Amos showed that privilege of race before God did not mean race immunity but responsibility.⁸⁴ Amos proclaimed, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I

⁸¹ Otto, The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, p. 77.

⁸² Op. cit., p. 43.

⁸³ Matthew 3:8ff and Luke 3:8.

⁸⁴ Amos 2:6ff; 3:2; 5:18-27.

will visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). A further proof that the rite must have been demanded of all is found in the baptism of Jesus. The fact that Jesus insisted on being baptized in order "to fulfill all righteousness" lends support to the idea that it was universally needed.⁸⁵

The uniqueness of John's baptism resided in its application to the whole nation which was polluted. He excommunicated all Israel and put them in the position of Gentiles.⁸⁶ Israel was considered as alien and had to be brought back and be incorporated into the new Israel by an analogous act which the Gentiles were required to use to be incorporated into Israel. It is in this light that John's baptism can be most clearly understood as Manson shows:

The baptism of John can perhaps be most readily understood by reference to the Jewish baptism of proselytes. As the baptism of the proselyte was part of the ceremony of dedication by which a Gentile was incorporated into Israel, so John's baptism is an act of rededication by which Israelites, who through sin have lost their right to the name, may be incorporated afresh into the true Israel.⁸⁷

But the idea that the whole nation had become alienated from God and was outside the covenant relationship was not new with John. The prophets who were before John were in agreement on this.⁸⁸ Jeremiah went so far as to proclaim a new covenant

⁸⁵ Marsh, op. cit., p. 44.

⁸⁶ M. Dods, "Baptism," D. C. G., Vol. I, pp. 169-170.

⁸⁷ T. W. Manson, The Mission and Message of Jesus, p. 333.

⁸⁸ Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 23:9ff; Ezekiel 3:7.

because of the national apostasy.⁸⁹ The apostle Paul in Romans 3:10-12 quotes Psalm 14:13 which had been previously used against the Gentiles as applying to both Jew and Greek.

It may be that John's universal demand of baptism because of national apostasy affords an explanation for John's use of the Jordan river for his practice. It is said to have been the opinion of the Rabbis that the waters of the Jordan were not pure enough for sacred use.⁹⁰ However, Abrahams maintains that the ban on the Jordan for religious purposes applied only to the ceremony of the Red Heifer and that "no rabbi ever dreamed of pronouncing the Jordan unfit for the rite of baptism."⁹¹ But why did John select the river Jordan for the practice of his rite? Is it because it was the only place it could be practised? Or is it because of the prominence of the river in the history of Israel?

Marsh lists several reasons why John would have selected the Jordan for his baptism.⁹² One possibility is the vision of Ezekiel in which the river of life in its mission of healing flowed towards the Jordan and the Dead Sea.⁹³ Another

89 Jeremiah 31:31f.

90 Tohoroth, Parah VIII.10 in Mishnah (Danby), p. 707.

91 Abrahams, op. cit., p. 33.

92 Op. cit., p. 37f.

93 Ezekiel 47.

possibility is the story of Naaman, the Syrian general, who was cleansed from his leprosy by washing in the river Jordan.⁹⁴ Naaman baptized himself and returned to Elisha to confess his belief in God.⁹⁵ It may be that this story of a proud heathen who found salvation by obedience to the words of the prophet Elisha influenced John to protest against a false trust in national privileges and lack of obedience by the Jews. Jesus uses Naaman as an example in His sermon at Nazareth and it is quite possible that He remembers it from John's preaching.

A third reason why John used the Jordan for his rite may be the significance of the river in early Hebrew history. The Israelites crossed the Jordan to enter the Promised land. At the present time John considers the Jews as being outside the covenant relationship and the way to renew that relationship is to put themselves outside the Promised land and re-enter through the prophetic symbolic action of baptism.⁹⁷ It is

94 II Kings 5:1-15.

95 The words used here are significant. The word used for Naaman's dipping himself is βαπτίζειν in the Greek and בָּטַח in the Hebrew. These terms remind one of John's baptism and the tebilah. Also in II Kings 5:15 the Greek word ἐπιστρέφειν (Hebrew שׁוּב) is used to describe Naaman's return to Elisha to confess God.

96 Luke 4:27.

97 F. J. Badcock, "The Significance of the Baptism of Christ," The Interpreter, Vol. XIII, 1917, pp. 155-160.

possible that there is a fourth reason which may be closer to John. He was considered by the multitudes as Elijah, the prophet. What place could be better suited for the return of Elijah than beyond the Jordan where he was taken up?⁹⁸

3. The Primitive Form of John's Baptism.

It is now generally accepted by New Testament scholars that immersion was the normal mode for both John's rite and Christian baptism.⁹⁹ However, there are questions that have arisen in late years concerning the circumstances under which the rite was performed. One question in particular is whether it was performed by an agent or whether it was self-administered. A number of scholars¹⁰⁰ maintain that John did not actually immerse the bodies of the candidates but was a witness to self-immersion.

98 II Kings 2:1-12.

99 Vide Appendix C.

100 J. Wellhausen, Das Evangelium Marci, pp. 4f; C. R. Bowen, "Prolegomena To a New Study of John the Baptist" in Studies in Early Christianity, edited by S. J. Case, pp. 132-136; Martin Dibelius, Die urchristliche Uberlieferung von Johannes dem Taucher, pp. 135ff; Wilhelm Brandt, op. cit., pp. 60ff; M. S. Enslin, Christian Beginnings, pp. 196f; E. I. Bosworth, The Life and Teaching of Jesus, pp. 63f; B. S. Easton, "Self-Baptism," A. J. T., Vol. XXIV, 1920, pp. 513-518; H. V. Martin, "The Primitive Form of Christian Baptism," The Expository Times, Vol. 59, 1947-48, pp. 160-163; Marsh, op. cit., pp. 78-81.

The argument for self-baptism begins with the variant reading of the Western text in Luke 3:7 which is ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ in place of ὑπ' αὐτοῦ . Bowen claims that if the Western reading is not original it would still seem to be a "correct interpretation of Mark's ambiguous ὑπό, Mark himself, in 1:4, does not say that John 'baptized', but that he 'announced' a baptism."¹⁰¹ By itself this variant reading is inadequate to support the claim of self-baptism.

Another argument for self-baptism is discovered in the title given to John in the Gospels. Bowen differentiates between ὁ βαπτίζων and ὁ βαπτιστής , the titles given to John, and claims that the former says that John administered a certain rite, but the latter says that he belonged to a certain fellowship.¹⁰² In this differentiation Bowen sees an argument for self-immersion of John's candidates. He maintains that as patron and administrator of the rite, John is ὁ βαπτίζων even if he has no actual part in the immersion of the body. This is not conclusive from the standpoint of grammar as Martin establishes by such an example as σοφιστής which may mean 'one who makes men wise' so that βαπτιστής may mean 'one who makes men baptized'.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Op. cit., p. 136; Vide also Wellhausen, op. cit., p. 4 and Dibelius, op. cit., p. 135, n. 2.

¹⁰² Op. cit., p. 135.

¹⁰³ Op. cit., p. 161.

It is further contended that since the proselyte bath was one of self-immersion, as has already been shown,¹⁰⁴ John of a necessity followed the same pattern.¹⁰⁵ There is meager support for this argument. Since John's baptism was different from the proselyte tebilah in its universal demand, it could also differ on the way in which it was administered.

Those who begin with the assumption that John's rite was administered on the analogy of proselyte baptism seek to prove their point on linguistic grounds. On the basis of linguistic evidence Easton attempts to present a case for self-immersion. He points out that there are three examples¹⁰⁶ in the New Testament where βαπτίζειν is used in the middle voice in dealing with water baptism and five examples¹⁰⁷ where according to the form it could be either middle or passive. In three other cases, all of which occur in Luke, the middle appears as a variant reading,¹⁰⁸ In view of the middle forms that occur and those that could be either middle or passive according to form, it is contended that "the active and passive forms are more easily explicable, if the immersing were self-performed,

104 Supra, pp. 52f.2f.

105 Easton, op. cit., pp. 513-515; Martin, op. cit., p. 161; et al.

106 Mark 7:4; Acts 22:16; I Corinthians 6:11.

107 John 3:23; Acts 8:12; 8:16; 18:8; I Corinthians 15:29.

108 Luke 3:12; 11:38; 12:50.

than are the middle forms, if it were the act of some one else."¹⁰⁹

Of the three examples of the use of the middle in connection with water baptism only one can be valid for any consideration. Mark 7:4 refers to Pharisaic purification and has no direct connection with John's baptism nor Christian baptism. Concerning I Corinthians 10:2 it is noticeable that many manuscripts and those of great weight, i. e. \times ACD G33 have a passive reading while the middle reading is supported by BKL^P. Tischendorf and Von Soden hold to the passive form. Acts 22:16, the third example, is a description by Paul of his baptism where Ananias says: ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλυσαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ . Easton points out that the phrasing is closely paralleled by descriptions of the proselyte tebilah experience. He claims that "calling upon his name" by the Christian convert is equivalent to the proselyte tebilah benediction uttered by the new convert to Judaism. Though βάπτισαι is truly an example of the middle form, it may be translated "get yourself baptized" instead of "baptize yourself." The evidence submitted above is not sufficient to prove that John's rite was self-administered and the presence of ὑπ' αὐτοῦ and ἐβαπτίζοντο in Mark 1:4

¹⁰⁹ Bowen, op. cit., p. 136.

renders it impossible for anyone to construe any other meaning than passive from the verb. Hence, the rite was administered by John.¹¹⁰

4. Jesus and John's Baptism.

It is apparent from a study of the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel that a close relationship existed between Jesus and the Baptist. When John sent his disciples to Jesus to inquire if He was "The Coming One," Jesus gave a high estimate of John and his mission.¹¹¹ The disciples of John came and told Jesus about the death of their master (Matthew 14:12). As has already been pointed out some of the followers of Jesus had previously been the disciples of John (John 1:35). In the temple when Jesus was asked by the chief priests, scribes, and elders concerning His authority for doing the things He was doing, He asked the question, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?"¹¹² Jesus implies here that the baptism of John was from heaven. It is noticeable also that Jesus in His first message preaches that which is recorded as belonging to the message of John.¹¹³

110 Oepke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 544; Flemington, op. cit., p. 16.

111 Matthew 11:2-19 and Luke 7:18-35.

112 Mark 11:29-33; Matthew 21:24-27; Luke 20:3-7.

113 Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15; Matthew 3:2.

a. The baptism of Jesus by John. The relationship between Jesus and John that created the greatest embarrassment for the early Church was His baptism at the hands of John. The account is certainly historical or the Evangelists would have immediately rejected it because of the difficulty involved in its presentation.¹¹⁴ No Christian would have invented the story "for this account was bound to lead to misunderstanding - as it actually did - because the Baptist's disciples would naturally conclude that their master was Jesus' superior."¹¹⁵

With Mark there is an unhesitating acceptance of the baptism of Jesus by John because he seemingly feels that no difficulty is involved.¹¹⁶ Matthew, in representing a more advanced stage of doubting reflection, is embarrassed and becomes apologetic by inserting two verses of a conversation between Jesus and John in which conversation John refuses to baptize Jesus because He is superior to him (Matthew 3:14-15). Jesus replies that it is fitting for Him to do so in order to "fulfill all righteousness." Luke who probably represents a final stage of acquiescence removes the stress from baptism

114 Marsh, op. cit., p. 101; Flemington, op. cit., p. 27.

115 M. Dibelius, Gospel Criticism and Christology, p. 91.

116 Mark 1:9f; A. B. Bruce, "The Baptism of Jesus," The Expositor, 5th Series, Vol. VII, 1898, p. 189.

and puts it on the praying. He alludes to the baptism of Jesus but only in a casual way by explaining the whole act with a participle (Luke 3:21). The Fourth Gospel omits the actual baptism altogether, but he does mention that the Baptist witnessed the Spirit coming down upon Jesus which doubtless is at His baptism (John 1:32-34). However, there is also an apologetic note sounded in the Fourth Gospel. John is made to admit that he is not the Messiah (John 1:21), and he also states that he must decrease while Jesus is to increase (John 3:30).

From the above discussion it would seem that Mark is the primitive story for the baptism of Jesus.¹¹⁷ Later perhaps the Marcan narrative was open to false interpretation such as the sinfulness of Jesus or His inferiority to the Baptist and for that reason they took precautions against such. It is certain that a difficulty was felt because it left its mark on the Apocryphal narratives. An apologetic note is sounded in the well-known passage from Jerome:

Behold the Lord's mother and brothers said to him, John the Baptist is baptizing unto remission of sins: let us go and be baptized by him. Then he said to them, What sin have I done that I should go and be baptized by him? -- unless perchance this very saying of mine is a sin of ignorance.¹¹⁸

117 F. C. Burkitt, "The Baptism of Jesus," The Expository Times, XXXVIII, 1926-27, pp. 198-202.

118 Jerome, Contra Pelagius 3:2, quote from Gospel of Hebrews: "Ecce mater et fratres eius dicebant ei: Iohannes baptista baptizat in remissionem peccatorum; eamus et baptizemur ab eo. Dixit autem eis: Quid peccavi ut vadam et baptizer ab eo? nisi forte hoc ispum quod dixi ignorantia est."

How do the Gospels stand in relation to the original circumstances surrounding the baptism of Jesus? Creed says that a "comparative study of the Gospels reveals a tendency to transform the event into a public attestation of Jesus as the Christ."¹¹⁹ In Mark the experience of the voice and the Spirit coming down as a dove is purely subjective. The account of Luke is not too different except that he wishes to emphasize the objective side of the experience by the bodily appearance of the dove. In Matthew the divine utterance is changed from the second person to the third person and seems to be addressed to the bystanders rather than to Jesus. In the Fourth Gospel John recognizes Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and at the baptism of Jesus the appearance of the Spirit is witnessed by John.

Bultmann does not believe the experience of Jesus at His baptism is purely subjective as some have discovered in the Marcan account.¹²⁰ He maintains that εἶδεν means that John saw the heavens splitting and the Spirit as a dove coming down. Goguel, in reply to this, claims that it is contrary to normal grammatical construction and general sense.¹²¹ Furthermore,

119 Op. cit., p. 55.

120 Bultmann, Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition, p. 152.

121 Goguel, Jean-Baptiste, p. 144f. "Mais cela serait contraire à la construction grammaticale normale aussi bien qu'au sens général, car, dans l'ensemble du récit, c'est Jésus qui est le sujet principal."

Bultmann argues that there is nothing to indicate that Jesus alone heard the voice. Goguel agrees with this but says that there is nothing more which indicates the contrary.

What is the meaning of the descent of the Spirit and the symbolism of the dove? In the Rabbinical literature the dove is for the most part the emblem of the community of Israel.¹²² It appears probable, only to a very limited degree, that the dove was treated as a symbol of the Spirit of God in the Rabbinical literature.¹²³ However, Abrahams has taken the suggestive references and has sought a relationship between the dove and the Spirit of God. He quotes from the Babylonian Talmud an example in Berachoth fol. 3a, "I heard a Bath-Qol moaning as a dove and saying: Woe to the children through whose iniquities I laid waste my Temple." Abrahams says of the above passage, "It is this association of the bird and the heavenly voice that may underlie the Gospel narrative of the baptism, and at once illustrate and authenticate the symbolism of the Synoptists."¹²⁴ It is impossible to determine precisely the meaning of the dove-symbolism, but the evidence would seem to point to Genesis 1:2 where the Spirit of God brooded (as a bird) upon the face of the waters. This would

¹²² Abrahams, op. cit., p. 48.

¹²³ Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 123.

¹²⁴ Op. cit., pp. 47f.

suggest that "a new thing was being wrought in the waters of baptism comparable with the creation of heaven and earth out of the primeval chaos."¹²⁵

What is the significance of the voice from heaven? The "voice out of heaven" is similar to that which is described in the Rabbinical literature in the words בית קול. The expression means literally "daughter of the voice" which signifies in itself nothing more than a call or echo. When the term is applied to divine manifestation, it implies that it was audible to human ears without the personal theophany.¹²⁶ The revelation of God given through the bath qol was a substitute for a direct Word of God through the prophets. Since the days of the last prophets this direct Word from God was absent from Israel and all they heard was the inferior bath qol. Abundant evidence for the statement on the bath qol are found in Strack-Billerbeck.¹²⁷ It is quite possible that there is a relationship between the "voice out of heaven" that Jesus heard and the bath qol which was familiar to Judaism.

It has already been noted that the baptism of Jesus by John was a perplexing problem to the early Church. Naturally,

125 Barrett, op. cit., p. 39.

126 G. Dalman, "Bath Kol," N. S. H. R. E., Vol. II, p. 4.

127 Op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 125-128; Cf. also S. Schechter, Studies in Judaism, 2nd Series, pp. 109ff; Edersheim, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 285; A. E. J. Rawlinson, St. Mark, pp. 9f.

the question would be asked, "Why did Jesus come to be baptized?" It is obvious that the passage in Mark on John's preaching about a baptism of repentance with a view to remission of sins would imply, at first glance, that all who were baptized recognized their sinful nature.¹²⁸ When, therefore, the narrative relates that Jesus came to be baptized by John, the inference is clear that He also recognized Himself as a sinner.¹²⁹ The problem of Jesus' baptism is posed by the teaching concerning His sinless life. If He was sinless and submitted to the baptism, then it was argued that the baptism was unnecessary and He was hypocritical in the act, because He had nothing of which to repent.

Edersheim lists some fourteen different views concerning the baptism of Jesus and proposes that all are in error at two points.¹³⁰ They represent the baptism of John as one of repentance and imply that there was some ulterior motive behind Jesus' submission to the rite. As it applied to sinful men he holds that it was a "baptism of repentance," but not so when it was applied to Jesus. Wendt is more correct in emphasizing the positive element of repentance which is a bent of the

128 Kirsopp and Silva Lake, An Introduction to the New Testament, p. 8; also James Denney, The Death of Christ, p. 18.

129 J. Middleton Murray, The Life of Jesus, pp. 30f. says that Jesus came as a sinner to John's baptism.

130 Edersheim, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 279f.

spirit towards conformity with the Divine Will with the essential purpose of a positive endeavor for righteousness and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom.¹³¹

Denney discovers the key for the meaning of Jesus' baptism in Isaiah 53 "in which the vocation of the Servant of the Lord, which, as we have seen, was present to our Lord's mind at the moment, is most amply unfolded."¹³² Jesus numbers Himself with the transgressors, submits to be baptized with their baptism, identifies Himself with them in their relation to God as sinners, and makes all responsibilities His own.

There is no contradiction between Jesus' receiving baptism at the hands of John and belief in His sinless life. Like the other sons of Abraham, Jesus presented Himself for baptism in order to break with the disobedience and unfaithfulness of Israel that had brought destruction upon them in times past. He felt it necessary to join Himself with the revival of prophetic religion inaugurated by John, because He could not remain aloof from such a movement which bound the people together in fresh allegiance to God. There should be no question over the baptism of Jesus because of His experience connected with it. His experience at His baptism justifies His acceptance of it "to fulfill all righteousness."

The heavenly voice and the descent of the Spirit both

¹³¹ H. H. Wendt, Teaching of Jesus, Vol. I, pp. 98f.

¹³² Denney, op. cit., p. 20.

confirm the action of Jesus. It is noteworthy that the voice contained part of the coronation formula of the Messianic king. In Psalm 2:7 the statement, Σὺ εἶ ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, embodies "the terms of a divine decree ratifying the royal office of the king of Israel on the day of his enthronement."¹³³ The voice also contained a quotation from Isaiah 42:1 ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα which is the ordination formula of the Suffering Servant. By this combination of passages the voice "succeeds in at once anointing the unique Son as the Messiah and ordaining Him as the Suffering Servant."¹³⁴ It is impossible to think that this combination is purely accidental, and it is quite unreasonable to believe that it is the work of the early Church explaining the voice in the light of Old Testament ideals.¹³⁵ The baptism of Jesus is a confirmation of His own consciousness of the fact of His Messiahship and serves as a definition of the nature of His Messiahship which would be along the lines of suffering, trial, and death.

b. The continuation of John's baptism by Jesus. In the Fourth Gospel there is an account of Jesus and His disciples carrying on a rite of baptism which is concurrent with that of

133 W. Manson, The Gospel of Luke, The Moffatt Commentary, p. 31.

134 John W. Bowman, The Intention of Jesus, p. 39.

135 James Denney, Jesus and the Gospel, p. 203.

John (John 3:22-26; 4:1f.). On this the Synoptists are noticeably silent. There are some who think it unlikely that the custom of baptism which began with John should have been abandoned and then suddenly resumed after Jesus' death. They contend that the passages in the Fourth Gospel show that Jesus continued John's baptism throughout His ministry and the reason for the silence of the Synoptists is that they were not concerned with emphasizing the normal.¹³⁶ This particular view is without sufficient foundations.¹³⁷

The writer of the Fourth Gospel presents a concurrent ministry of John and Jesus which is reminiscent of a time when Jesus at the beginning of His ministry associated Himself with John's call to repentance, proclaimed the nearness of the kingdom of God, and baptized as did John. Hoskyns maintains that there "is no historical improbability" to this view.¹³⁸ When the hope of mere preparation passed out of John's baptism, then the preparatory rite which Jesus allowed His disciples to practise was withdrawn. If baptism had been the regular part of Jesus' ministry, surely there would have been some mention of it in the Synoptists in the instructions for the Twelve and the Seventy (Mark 6:7ff. and Luke 10:1).

¹³⁶ A. C. Headlam, Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ, p. 201.

¹³⁷ Lambert, op. cit., p. 63.

¹³⁸ Edwyn Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, p. 226.

So it must be admitted that the baptism which Jesus practised in His early Judaeian ministry recorded by the Fourth Gospel writer is a passing part of Jesus' activity. MacGregor contends that the Evangelist records this incident to show that Jesus' baptism was not preparatory like that of John, "but as that perfect baptism 'with water and the Spirit', which is the essential condition of the new-birth."¹³⁹

In an examination of the passage under discussion several matters are introduced which must be considered. First, it seems that the Fourth Gospel is a corrective of the Synoptists. Goguel maintains that John adds the comment of verse 24 "for John was not yet cast into prison" because he is conscious that his account contradicted the Synoptists, according to whom the ministry of Jesus did not begin until John was cast into prison.¹⁴⁰ The Evangelist emphasized the point of deviation so that his readers would understand that he was not confused but had some particular reason for differing with the others. He knew of an early Judaeian ministry of Jesus, not recorded by the Synoptists, which was characterized by a continuation of John's rite of baptism.

A second matter of consideration is the contradictory material found in these passages. In John 3:26; 4:1 Jesus

¹³⁹ G. H. C. Macgregor, Gospel of John, Moffatt Commentary, p. 89.

¹⁴⁰ Goguel, Life of Jesus, p. 273f.

seems to have made and baptized more disciples than John, but in John 3:32 it is explicitly stated that no one receives the witness of Jesus. Goguel avoids this contradiction by holding, and correctly so, that verses 31-36 represent the theological thought of the Evangelist and are to be assigned to him.¹⁴¹ Jesus baptizes in John 3:22 and He does not baptize in John 4:2. Goguel says that John 4:2 automatically exposes itself as a secondary element because the Evangelist here contradicts the date of the source to make it conform to the current idea that Jesus did not baptize.¹⁴² There are three possible answers to this contradiction. One has been stated above and the other two may be the correction due to a redactor¹⁴³ or an explanation by the writer of what he meant when he said that Jesus baptized.¹⁴⁴ Goguel is probably closer to the reason for the contradiction than the others.

A third consideration is the possible dispute over the rite of baptism. It seems that in John 3:25-26 the competing and divergent baptisms for purification gave rise to a quarrel. The disciples of John were engaged with a Jew in a dispute

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 273.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 273f.

¹⁴³ Macgregor, op. cit., p. 93.

¹⁴⁴ Tertullian, On Baptism, XI. "One whose ministers do a thing is always said to do it."

περὶ καθαρισμοῦ "concerning purification." Immediately following this dispute the disciples of John come to the latter and tell him about Jesus baptizing beyond the Jordan and His popular appeal. John hastens to stop the jealous feeling on the part of his disciples by reminding them he had said that he was not the Messiah. It is assumed that there must have been some connection between the dispute over purification with a Jew and the baptism of Jesus and John. In verse 25 there are two readings to indicate those involved in the dispute with the disciples of John. The plural μετὰ Ἰουδαίων "with Jews" is supported by Codex Sinaiticus, the Koridethi Codex, Ferrar Group, Latin and Egyptian Versions, Curetonian Syriac and Origen. The singular μετὰ Ἰουδαίου "with a Jew" is supported by Codex Vaticanus and the majority of the Greek manuscripts among which are found Alexandrinus and Washington. It has been claimed that the singular and plural are corruptions of a primitive reading that has nowhere survived in the existing manuscripts of the Gospel.

On the basis of the doubt surrounding the original reading, Holtzmann proposed that the original statement was τοῦ Ἰησοῦ "with those of Jesus."¹⁴⁵ Baldensperger, in renewing the conjecture of Bentley, said that the text of the source material was τοῦ Ἰησοῦ "with Jesus."¹⁴⁶ Goguel¹⁴⁷ and

145 Oscar Holtzmann, Das Johannesevangelium, p. 210.

146 W. Baldensperger, Der Prolog des vierten Evangeliums, p. 66.

147 Op. cit., p. 274; Jean-Baptiste, pp. 86ff.

Otto¹⁴⁸ follow the suggestion by Baldensperger and discover a split between Jesus and John on the question of baptism. Goguel thinks that the error in the text may have been due to a scribe or a deliberate insertion by the Evangelist "who concluded that a discussion between the disciples of John and of Jesus would be incompatible with the testimony of the Forerunner reported in chapter I."¹⁴⁹ Otto points out that Mark 1:15 in a way shows Jesus' antithesis to John's activity:

It was no longer a magical sacrament, but a message, and indeed 'good news', which mediated the salvation of the eschatological order; and it was not the reception of the sacrament, but the voluntary opening of oneself in faith, the believing acceptance of a gospel message.¹⁵⁰

Otto and Goguel both think that Jesus abandoned baptism and split with John because of the new factor that He brought. Otto contends that "John had preached - Repent and receive the eschatological sacrament. Jesus preached - Repent and believe the besorah ('good news')."¹⁵¹

While this conjecture of Otto and Goguel is very interesting, it cannot command too great attention because there is too much magical value placed in John's baptism for which there is no evidence. In all probability Jesus dis-

148 R. Otto, op. cit., pp. 76-81.

149 Goguel, Life of Jesus, p. 274.

150 Otto, op. cit., p. 79.

151 Ibid., p. 79.

continued baptism because it was viewed by Him as preparatory, or after the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod, it may have been dangerous and misleading for Him to continue a rite so closely associated with John.¹⁵² It is quite possible that by using the rite of baptism that Jesus was endangering His mission in some way as may be indicated in John 4:1 and 3.

In connection with the preparatory baptism for the kingdom of God as practised by John and also by the disciples of Jesus during the early stages of His ministry, the well-known verse, John 3:5, naturally comes up for consideration. There are three possible ways of dealing with this statement in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus. It may be viewed as a correct representation by the Evangelist of the words of Jesus; as a blending of the author's own views or those of the Christian community with the original tradition; and finally, as worked over by a later redactor.

Lake¹⁵³ and others,¹⁵⁴ because there is no mention of

152 J. E. Roberts, "Jesus and Baptism," The Expositor, Vol. XXIII, p. 234.

153 K. Lake, The Influence of Textual Criticism on the Exegesis of the New Testament, pp. 14ff; also K. Lake and Silva Lake, An Introduction to the New Testament, p. 61.

154 A. Merx, Die Vier Kanonischen Evangelien, Vol. III, pp. 55-56; H. H. Wendt, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 91, n. 1, and Gospel of St. John, p. 120; J. E. Carpenter, Phases of Early Christianity, pp. 237f; E. von Dobschütz, "Sakrament und Symbol im urchristentum," T. S. K., 1905, p. 6, 17; J. Wellhausen, Das Evangelium Johannis, p. 18, "Es genügt, die Worte βάπτισμα καὶ in 3, 5 auszuheben."

water in verses 3 and 8 and because of the inverted order of the Peshitta Syriac on "water and spirit," argue that the genuine Johannine source has been worked over by a later redactor under the influence of ecclesiastical usage. Lake also appeals to Justin Martyr's Apologia 1, 61 as further proof that ὕδατος καὶ should be excised from the text. There is no manuscript evidence to support the claims of those scholars who would like to rule it out, so it must be assumed to be a part of the text.

Assuming that it is a part of the text, is John 3:5 to be interpreted as Johannine rather than the ipsissima verba of Jesus? If it is interpreted as Johannine, then there are several views on this. Howard¹⁵⁵ has summed them up as three. (1) The words ὕδατος καὶ are to be regarded as "a Johannine gloss to bring the saying of Jesus into harmony with the belief and practice of a later generation."¹⁵⁶ (2) The Evangelist assumes the outward rite, but stresses the spiritual side which gives it value.¹⁵⁷ (3) ἐξ ὕδατος is not to be interpreted as a contrast of two baptisms, but of two types of birth. This is the fantastic theory of Odeberg¹⁵⁸ which

155 W. F. Howard, The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, pp. 207-208.

156 J. H. Bernard, St. John, I. C. C., Vol. I, p. 105.

157 James Moffatt, Theology of the Gospels, p. 197.

158 H. Odeberg, The Fourth Gospel, pp. 48ff.

is based on passages from Jewish mysticism and Gnostic writings. He says that "ὕδωρ is that which in the spiritual process corresponds to the semen in the sarcial process."¹⁵⁹ His conclusion is that ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος primarily means ἐκ σπέρματος πνευματικῆς, "from a spiritual seed," in contrast to earthly, or sarcial seed.

If John 3:5 is taken as the ipsissima verba of Jesus, there are three ways of understanding the condition "Except a man be born of water and of spirit." (1) "It is conceivable, though hardly probable," says Howard, "that Jesus was referring to the baptism which His disciples practised (John 4:2)."¹⁶⁰ (2) Jesus had in mind proselyte baptism since in the Talmud there are references to a proselyte as being like a new-born child when he embraces Judaism and takes the tebilah. However, Edersheim contends that this new birth in connection with the proselyte bath was not a "birth from above" in the sense of moral or spiritual renovation, but only an implication of a new relationship to God, to Israel, and to his own past, present, and future.¹⁶¹ (3) A third possible way of understanding the words of Jesus is a reference to John's baptism.

The words ὕδατος καὶ seem to be more easily explained if

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁶⁰ Op. cit., p. 206.

¹⁶¹ Edersheim, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 746.

viewed in the light of John's baptism.¹⁶² Hoskyns points out that the immediate background for a close relationship between water and spirit is supplied by the relation between Jesus and John the Baptist (1:26, 31-34) and by the relation between Jesus and the Jewish purificatory rites (2:6; 3:25).¹⁶³ The context of John 3:5 would clearly indicate that John's rite is in the thoughts of Jesus when He speaks of water. Not only would it be in the thoughts of Jesus, but it would also be familiar to Nicodemus. The Pharisees as a class had rejected the rite of John (Luke 7:30). John met the Pharisees with stern demands, but because of their pride they were unwilling to submit to his baptism. Verse 10 implies that Nicodemus should know what Jesus was talking about, but this could not be the case if He is talking about Christian baptism or a sacramentarian idea connected with water as some hold. When Jesus speaks of a birth out of water, He has reference to John's baptism of repentance with a renunciation of the past by which men get ready for the kingdom of God.¹⁶⁴ In addition to the negative cleansing symbolized by water, Jesus further required the positive life that comes from God - birth out of the Spirit.

162 F. Godet, Commentary on the Gospel of St. John, p. 49; B. F. Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 50.

163 Hoskyns, op. cit., p. 214.

164 Lambert, op. cit., p. 72.

PART II

THE PRACTICE AND DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Chapter I

BAPTISM IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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BAPTISM IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

It has been proposed by some that any study of the practices and doctrines of the early Church should begin with the writings of the Apostle Paul, since his letters form the earliest documentary evidence on the primitive Christianity with the possible exception of the Epistle of James.¹ While the writer is in complete agreement with the procedure, it is quite evident that there is material in Acts which is more primitive than that contained in the writings of Paul. It may be safely assumed that Acts records "with a considerable degree of faithfulness many of the beliefs and practices of pre-Pauline Christianity."² If there is to be anything like a connected picture of the life of the primitive Christian community, it is essential to consider Acts before the Epistles of Paul in order to supply the "link in the chain of evidence" for the practice and doctrine of baptism in primitive Christianity.

The author of Acts, who is generally held by scholars to be Luke the writer of the third Gospel, begins his work with the subject of baptism by pointing out the difference between

1 Lambert, op. cit., p. 82.

2 Flemington, op. cit., p. 37.

John's rite with water and the future baptism with the Spirit (Acts 1:5). While it is not so stated that Pentecost is the fulfillment of the baptism of the Spirit, it seems to be assumed as such by later passages.³ The statement in Acts 1:5 is reminiscent of Mark 1:8, except that in Mark it is the Baptist who speaks while in Acts Jesus is the speaker; then, too, it has already been noted that perhaps the Christian tradition had "fire" instead of Spirit. However, despite the promise of Jesus in Acts 1:5, it is worthwhile to observe that Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost finds the anticipation of the pouring out of the Spirit in the prophecy of Joel and not in the words of Jesus. In Acts 2:38 Peter does relate baptism to a baptism of the Spirit, but even here it is a promise of the Spirit on the condition of repentance and water baptism.

It is surprising that the author of Acts makes no mention of a command to baptize in his Gospel. The commission of Jesus to His disciples in Luke's Gospel is similar to that given in Matthew 28:19-20 with the exception of the command to baptize. Luke in his Gospel is noticeably silent on the matter of a command by Jesus to His disciples for them to baptize. In contrast to the silence of his Gospel, baptism in Acts holds a prominent place and the references to it are more numerous in this book than in any other book in the New

3 Acts 11:16; 18:25; 19:4.

Testament. It is because of this and other reasons that some have contended that baptism was not practised at the very beginning of the Christian movement.

Jackson and Lake believe that the editor of Acts was not in sympathy with the view set forth in Acts 1:5, but looked upon baptism as a Christian practice from the very beginning and edited his sources in favor of that opinion.⁴ This sudden introduction of baptism in the early part of Acts is claimed by Jackson and Lake to be inconsistent with the facts in the case. They say that the disciples had received the Spirit without themselves being baptized for that particular purpose, and that Acts 1:5 implies that a baptism in Spirit is a substitute for a baptism in water and not a consequence of it. They cite a passage according to Euthymius Zigabenus where the Bagomils were struck by the contrast.⁵

The clue to the actual rise of the practice of baptism

4 Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, The Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. I, pp. 339ff.

5 Ibid., p. 340, n. 1. The text cited by Jackson and Lake follows: τὸ μὲν παρ' ἡμῖν βάπτισμα τοῦ Ἰωάννου λέγουσιν, ὡς δι' ὕδατος ἐπιτελούμενον, τὸ δὲ παρ' αὐτοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ διὰ πνεύματος, ὡς δοκεῖ αὐτοῖς τελούμενον. διὸ καὶ τὸν προσερχόμενον αὐτοῖς ἀναβαπτίζουσι, πρῶτα μὲν ἀφορίζοντες αὐτῷ καιρὸν εἰς ἐξομολογήσιν καὶ ἀγείαν καὶ σύντονον, προσευλήν. εἴτα τῇ κεφαλῇ, αὐτοῦ τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον ἐπιτιθέοντες, καὶ τὸ παρ' αὐτοῖς ἅγιον πνεῦμα ἐπικαλούμενοι καὶ τὸ πάτερ ἡμῶν ἐπάρχοντες . . .

in primitive Christianity is found by some⁶ in the narrative of Philip in Acts 8 and they suggest that the Seven, when they preached to the heathen population like that of Samaria, made the customary demand for proselyte baptism on the heathen as that made for Judaism. Weiss, who contends that the author of Acts has antedated the situation when he introduces baptism so soon as Pentecost since it was not the norm of practice in the early Church as the incident at Ephesus with Apollos and the twelve disciples indicates, holds that proselyte baptism which followed upon circumcision is probably the prototype that was determinative for the Christian Church of Jewish-Hellenistic origin.⁷ When confronted with the difficult problem of Paul's baptism, Weiss replies, "we would have to assume a permanent influence of the baptism of John."⁸ In another place he suggests that Paul may have been baptized later at Antioch, or it could have been a practice which was prevalent in Damascus from the very beginning.⁹ Teichmann, who also follows the fanciful assumption that in the early days of the Church only Gentile believers were baptized after

6 J. Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity, Vol. I, pp. 49f and Vol. II, pp. 63lff.; E. Teichmann, "Die Taufe bei Paulus," Z. T. K., 1896, pp. 367ff; M. S. Enslin, Christian Beginnings, pp. 195f.; Jackson and Lake, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 34lff.; K. Lake and Silva Lake, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 236.

7 Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 631.

8 Ibid., p. 631.

9 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 196, n. 12.

the analogy of proselyte baptism by which they were admitted to the Jewish community, tries to avoid the difficulty of Jews being baptized as well as Gentiles by claiming that in mixed churches such as the Pauline churches the Jews were baptized for uniformity's sake.¹⁰

Silva New would like to make of the baptism mentioned in Acts 2:38 an example of proselyte baptism, since she suggests that perhaps those to whom Peter preached were non-Jewish.¹¹ Miss New has no evidence to support her view. Carrington agrees with the opinion of the scholars listed above to this extent, that "when Christianity entered the mission field, the rite was bound to assimilate itself to Jewish proselyte baptism,"¹² but he differs with them by holding that Christian baptism had a different origin because it was administered first of all to the Jews. Clemen denies that proselyte baptism is the antecedent of Christian baptism, because the Jews as well as the Gentiles were baptized and because it would be the same as introducing a purificatory rite into Christianity which rite Jesus Himself would have condemned.¹³

Since the explanation of Jackson and Lake is too subject-

¹⁰ Op. cit., pp. 367ff.

¹¹ The Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. V, p. 135.

¹² P. Carrington, The Primitive Christian Catechism, p. 14.

¹³ Op. cit., p. 215.

ive to permit acceptance and since the theory of Weiss is too superficial as a satisfactory answer, it is now necessary to consider the possibility of baptism as being the norm of practice in the early Church. It has been observed that in Acts 1:5 a sharp contrast is apparently drawn between John's baptism and Christian baptism.¹⁴ Flemington has pointed out, and correctly so, that it might be that the contrast in this verse is somewhat overdrawn and may not be as precise as the English reading appears.¹⁵ In Acts 1:5 and 11:16 ὕδατι is the simple dative and is followed by the prepositional phrase ἐν πνεύματι . In Mark 1:8 the contrast is made more forceful by the use of the dative in both clauses.

It is assumed by the author of Acts that baptism was from the beginning, but in what manner was it considered? Was it John's baptismal rite which was supposed to be superseded by the baptism with the Holy Spirit? Is it that the passage is metaphorical and does not refer to Christian baptism?¹⁶ Was there a misunderstanding on the part of the disciples in thinking they were to continue a rite of water baptism which was actually cancelled by Jesus?

It has already been noted that Luke knows nothing of a

14 This contrast is also set forth in Acts 11:16 which is a repetition of the words of Jesus in Acts 1:5.

15 Op. cit., p. 39, n. 2.

16 K. Lake, "Baptism (Christian)," E. R. E., Vol. II, pp. 382-383.

command of Jesus to baptize as that given by Matthew. Concerning the command in the first Gospel, it was shown that when the principles of historical, literary, and textual criticism were applied to the command to baptize in Matthew 28:19-20 that there was no sufficient evidence to declare the passage unauthentic. It was also concluded that even if this command was not the ipsissima verba of Jesus, then it would still rest upon dominical authority on the basis of the life and ministry of Jesus. Jesus Himself was baptized by John and the Spirit descended upon Him making Him conscious of His Messiahship. From the Fourth Gospel account (John 3:22, 26; 4:1, 2) it was noticed that Jesus probably continued the rite of John with its eschatological significance for a short period of time in an early Judaeen ministry. The metaphorical use of baptism in Luke 12:50 could possibly have had a great deal of influence on the significance of baptism in primitive Christianity. In all probability it was influential in shaping the doctrine of Paul on baptism (if indeed this idea was peculiar to Paul instead of the early Church) in Romans 6:2ff. So even apart from a word of Jesus the rite was only natural for the disciples since some of them had been the disciples of John and had submitted to his rite. At least one is on firmer ground in seeing a relationship with John's rite in the sermon of Peter than proselyte

baptism.¹⁷

The scene at Pentecost terminates in the revival of the appeal of John the Baptist: "Repent and be baptized unto the remission of sins." However, there are some differences that should be noted. Peter sounds a new note in his preaching. It is not one of a warning of impending judgment, but an invitation to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit as he has received. There is a promise instead of a threat.¹⁸ This promise becomes attainable only on the condition that they recognize that Jesus has been made truly "Lord and Messiah" and they are willing to place themselves under His name.

The statement of Jesus in Acts 1:5 does not indicate that water baptism is to be superseded by Spirit baptism for two reasons. The first reason stems from the familiarity of Jesus' disciples with John's rite and Jesus' own knowledge of the message of John. On the basis of this "it seems scarcely credible that Jesus should use the figure of baptism concerning His own gift of the Spirit if he meant to reject the symbol entirely."¹⁹

17 A. Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, p. 234; S. Angus, Religious Quests in the Graeco-Roman World, p. 150; H. Windisch, Taufe und Sünde in ältesten Christentum bis auf Origen, p. 45; A. C. McGiffert, op. cit., pp. 59ff; Lietzmann, op. cit., p. 80; Feine, op. cit., N. S. H. R. E., Vol. I, p. 436; A. Seeberg, Die Taufe im Neuen Testament, pp. 5-8.

18 J. E. Carpenter, Phases of Early Christianity, pp. 233f.

19 Marsh, op. cit., p. 166.

A second reason why water baptism was not superseded by Spirit baptism and was the adoption and adaptation of John's baptism for entrance into the Christian community is discovered in the example of Jesus. Since all four Gospels have some reference to a relationship of the water baptism of Jesus and the descent of the Spirit, it is quite possible that the early disciples recognized in the water rite for entrance into the fellowship and relationship with the Holy Spirit. Hopwood has made such an observation in the experience of the disciples:

As with their Master, the believers discovered that the very intensity of their baptismal experience led them to feel as if the heavens were opening and the Spirit of God descending upon them. The baptized convert passed into the Spirit-controlled community, and shared in the new life inspired by the Spirit. Baptism tended to become the open door to inspiration and thus became more closely associated with the receiving of the Spirit. In the course of time the two experiences came to be felt as being intrinsically connected.²⁰

Schweitzer²¹ maintains that it is not until the time of Ignatius²² that any kind of connection is drawn between the baptism of Jesus and Christian baptism. He observes that the connection that Ignatius finds between them does not

20 P. G. S. Hopwood, The Religious Experience of the Primitive Church, pp. 280f.

21 Op. cit., p. 234.

22 To Ephesians 18:2: "Jesus was born and baptized in order that by His passion He might purify the water."

mean that Christian baptism is a repetition of the baptism of Jesus. It is not until Irenaeus²³ and Tertullian²⁴ that it is thought the baptism of Jesus created Christian baptism. However, this silence does not render impossible an earlier teaching of a relationship with Jesus' baptism and the descent of the Spirit. Therefore it may be safely assumed that the water rite of John was not superseded by the Spirit Baptism but was supplemented by it as Flemington says:

Baptism with water was not superseded, because the outward action, which had possessed such profound meaning by Jesus himself, was found to be expressive of, and also to help in bringing about, that re-direction of personality, that turning to God and acceptance of his rule, which is what the New Testament means by 'repentance'.²⁵

1. Three Views of Baptism in Acts.

Around the narratives on baptism in Acts many questions have been raised without being answered. The material in the work is complicated throughout. When each passage that refers to baptism is considered separately, then no problem is confronted. It is only when the passages are set over against each other that a real difficulty is noticed. The problem of reconciling the various accounts in Acts has led to the theory that the book had three different descriptions

23 Against Heresies, iii, 9, 3.

24 Against Jews, viii.

25 Op. cit., p. 122.

of Christian baptism. These three varied descriptions, according to Jackson and Lake, are due to an editor who combined his own views with the sources that he followed.²⁶

a. The first view is that baptism in the Holy Spirit seems to be given to Christians instead of the baptism of John which is characterized by water. This view is supported by Acts 1:5 and 11:15-16. Acts 1:5 has already been discussed and the contrast has been somewhat lessened by showing that water baptism was not superseded by Spirit baptism. In Acts 11:16 Peter in his defense before the Jerusalem church about the episode in connection with Cornelius upholds his action in eating with the Gentiles by telling how Cornelius and his friends received the Holy Spirit. He does not mention that Cornelius and the others were baptized, but rather implies that they were not by appealing to the "word of the Lord" which is a repetition of Acts 1:5 "John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:16).

In the actual visit of Peter to the house of Cornelius recorded in Acts 10:44-48, the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit apart from a baptism in water and an imposition of hands and Peter asked, "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" Here is an example where the water

²⁶ Op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 337-342.

baptism occurs after the reception of the Holy Spirit, yet in the account before the Jerusalem church Peter omits the water baptism. Is there an inconsistency between the two narratives? Why did not Peter mention the water baptism in Acts 11? Jackson and Lake think there is reason to suppose that in the "Peter" narratives of Pentecost (Acts 2:38) and of Cornelius (Acts 10:47-48) the sources used did not have anything about water baptism, but the redactor seeing that baptism was the custom in the second part of Acts, connected it with the gift of the Spirit and adapted the earlier narratives to agree with the later ones.²⁷

If then Acts 10:47-48 is due to a redactor as Jackson and Lake affirm, chapter 11 and the original of chapter 10 are related to Acts 1:5 and all represent the opinion that there is a contrast between water baptism and the baptism of the Spirit. Whether this is true or not, it is apparent that the reception of the Holy Spirit before water baptism was the abnormal thing and for that reason Peter and those with him must have been anxious to make regular that which was irregular. The surprise was that the Holy Spirit was given to the uncircumcised at all. In the primitive Church this episode is of immense significance because it affords a free opening of the door to the Gentiles and makes faith the

²⁷ Ibid., p. 341.

prominent concern. This was for the Gentiles the equivalent of the Pentecost for the Jews and might be called "the Pentecost of the Gentiles." This baptism was "the formal admittance of the Spirit-possessed Gentiles to the new community of the Spirit."²⁸

b. The second view is suggested by the scene at Ephesus where baptism in water resulted in possession of the Spirit provided it was "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Weiss uses the account here about Apollos (Acts 18:24ff.) and the disciples (Acts 19:1-7) along with the argument that the 120 disciples did not receive Christian baptism to prove that baptism was not from the very outset a necessary mark of the disciples of Jesus and the author of Acts antedated the situation when he introduced baptism as early Pentecost.²⁹ Weiss in his contention seems to go beyond the facts in the case. While the story shows that there were some in the early period of the Christian movement who were unacquainted with Christian baptism, it by no means indicates that it is a normal case. "The impression left by the whole conversation," says Flemington, "is that these disciples stood apart from the main stream of Christian practice, and the obvious thing to do was to put the matter right at once."³⁰

²⁸ Hopwood, op. cit., p. 278.

²⁹ Weiss, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

³⁰ Op. cit., p. 47.

When Paul came to Ephesus on his third missionary tour, he discovered twelve disciples who had not received the Holy Spirit and Paul asked the question *Εἰς τὶ οὖν ἐβαπτίσθητε* "Into what then were you baptized?" Their reply is *Εἰς τὸ Ἰωάννου βάπτισμα* "Into John's baptism." Paul immediately points out that such baptism is defective and they were baptized "into the name of the Lord Jesus." Following their baptism Paul laid his hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit. There is no reason to suppose that these were disciples of John. Marsh has discovered that the words *μαθητής* and *μαθηταί* occur some thirty times in Acts apart from this example, and in each case it means Christian disciples.³¹ Here then is an example of Christian disciples who were not acquainted with a baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus nor any connection of the reception of the Spirit with baptism. Lietzmann explains Acts 19:2f thusly:

We have here a fragment of an earlier condition such as we must assume for the beginning of the constitution of the church. At a later date, the more exact, liturgical, definitive formula was added: simple baptism in the Johannine mode "for repentance and forgiveness of sins" was no longer sufficient, and the name of Jesus must be named over the candidate. These Ephesian Christians were no more disciples of John than the Apollos who had been mentioned a little earlier, who also had received only the Johannine baptism, but who comes forward as a Christian missionary impelled by the Spirit.³²

It is evident that the contrast of baptisms is not be-

31 Op. cit., p. 156.

32 Op. cit., p. 81.

tween a water baptism and a Spirit baptism, but two baptisms in water, one of which is defective in that it did not convey the Holy Spirit because of the neglect of the formula "in the name of the Lord Jesus" and the other conveyed the Holy Spirit because it was with the correct formula.³³

Coupled with the episode about Paul and the twelve disciples is the incident about Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla in Acts 18:24ff. Cadbury and Lake say that the two incidents are drawn together to show how Christian baptism supplanted John's baptism.³⁴ The problem of this narrative seems to be centered in one verse which reads as follows: οὗτος ἦν κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ζέων τῷ πνεύματι ἐλάλει καὶ ἐδίδασκεν ἀκριβῶς τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐπιστάμενος μόνον τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου(18:25). The question naturally arises as to how one who has been instructed τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου and teaches accurately τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ can understand only τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου.

Wendt views verse 25 as an expansion of the source-narrative by the writer of Acts.³⁵ This expansion is influenced by Acts 19:1-7, the source on the disciples of Ephesus. Wendt claims that the writer understood Apollos to be an adherent

33 Jackson and Lake, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 338.

34 Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. IV, p. 231.

35 H. H. Wendt, Die Apostelgeschichte, (Meyer's Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar), pp. 270ff.

of that sect. Manson refutes the interpretation of Wendt by saying that there is no motive for the elaboration unless the source would suggest such.³⁶

Cadbury and Lake submit two interpretations of verse 25 either of which is not impossible.³⁷ (1) It is possible to believe that Apollos knew and taught accurately "the story of Jesus, but knew nothing of Christian baptism - which was part of the ὁδός but not of τὰ περὶ Ἰησοῦ." (2) A second theory is based on the statement that Apollos moved to Corinth and preached that "the Messiah was Jesus." The implication here is that he did not previously preach this doctrine. If it is true, then Apollos came to Ephesus and preached the eschatological gospel of John the Baptist on judgment, repentance, and the approaching Kingdom, but did not know that Jesus was the Messiah.

If the first interpretation be correct, then this passage may be connected with that which follows concerning the Ephesian Christians who also knew only the baptism of John. In this case then Priscilla and Aquila did for Apollos what Paul did for the twelve. By thus bringing the two stories together it may be that the writer has in mind to point out the way in which John's baptism was supplanted by Christian

³⁶ W. Manson, Jesus the Messiah, p. 227.

³⁷ Op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 231; also K. Lake, Earlier Epistles of St. Paul, pp. 108-111.

baptism. However, the conclusion of the story seems to be against this theory, because there is no mention of Apollos receiving Christian baptism. It may be that Aquila did baptize him. Or it may be that he did not because Apollos was already ζέων τῷ πνεύματι,³⁸ in which case there would be a parallel and a contrast to the episode in connection with Cornelius. Since there is no mention of a baptism of Apollos, it seems that the second theory is more tenable than the first. Apollos knew only by report the teaching of Jesus, but he was not acquainted with the greatest truth in connection with Jesus that He was the Messiah.

b. A third view of baptism is discovered in the narrative about Philip's work among the Samaritans (Acts 8:8-19). Here is a case where baptism in water even "in the name of the Lord Jesus" does not confer the Spirit, but this comes only when the Apostles lay their hands on the believers. In this the baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit are two distinct experiences.

At first glance there are three views as set forth above in the doctrine and practice of baptism in the early Church. However, it is not impossible to regard the second and the third of these as a single view. In both cases the disciples are baptized "into the name of the Lord Jesus" and the

38 It is to be noted that this expression is in Romans 12:11 and refers to Christians.

imposition of hands is the antecedent condition for reception of the Holy Spirit. Hopwood seeks to belittle the imposition of hands by Paul on the Ephesian disciples:

This laying on of hands is here regarded as no more than a part of the ceremony of baptism, a sort of fitting climax, being not the apostolic mediation of the Spirit since Paul was not a member of the official collegium.³⁹

It does not seem that there would be any more value in the laying on of the hands by the Apostles from Jerusalem, than the same act of Paul on the disciples of Ephesus since Paul was always pointing out his equality as an Apostle with those who were in Jerusalem. In the letter to the Galatians Paul built up his claim for equal apostleship with the rest into a fitting climax by the denunciation of Peter for playing the part of a hypocrite (Galatians 2:11).

The real difficulty comes in trying to reconcile the first view with the second and the third. These references are "few in number and occur only in reference to the original apostles or to Cornelius, whose case was obviously regarded as somehow exceptional."⁴⁰ It has already been pointed out in the beginning of this chapter that the baptism of the Spirit was viewed as a supplement of water baptism, and since

³⁹ Op. cit., p. 277; also Jackson and Lake, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 338.

⁴⁰ Flemington, op. cit., p. 42.

the disciples themselves had all possibly been baptized with John's baptism, it was only natural that they should associate Spirit baptism with water baptism, which for them had preceded their reception of the Spirit.

Another explanation for the different descriptions of baptism in Acts is presented by Weiss.⁴¹ He begins with I Corinthians 12:13 where membership in the community is dependent for the most part upon the supersensual experience of the reception of the Spirit in baptism. To the idea in this passage Weiss links I Corinthians 1:26ff., maintaining that in the experience of baptism "the 'calling' is completed and the 'election' receives visible expression."⁴² The implication of this is that baptism is a passive experience and it would be impossible for anyone to be baptized who did not belong to the elect. Passing from I Corinthians to Acts, he sees in Acts 10:44, 47; 2:38; and 8:12, 15 a reflection of the development in the idea of the relationship between baptism and the gift of the Spirit.

(1) The oldest stage is Acts 10:44, 47 which is characterized as being an entirely enthusiastic and supernatural conception.⁴³ God, in this state of development, sends down His

⁴¹ Op. cit., p. 622ff.

⁴² Ibid., p. 622.

⁴³ Cf. Romans 5:5; Galatians 4:6 and 3:2.

Spirit on men to show that He has chosen them. Weiss says that "here baptism must follow this heavenly indication and carry out in an earthly manner that which God has already determined."⁴⁴ (2) The second stage is found in Acts 2:38 where it is hoped that those who were baptized would receive the Holy Spirit. "But," adds Weiss, "it is very striking that in a following verse (2:41), although it is recorded that three thousand souls were baptized and that they 'were added,' no further mention is made of the reception of the Spirit."⁴⁵ (3) Acts 19:5f is the transition period to the third stage which is found in Acts 8:12, 15ff. where baptism does not mediate the reception of the Spirit by Philip but is accomplished by prayer and imposition of hands by the Apostles. Weiss holds that the Apostle Paul falls into the first stage of development of the idea and stands for "the oldest, supernatural, charismatic form of the idea."⁴⁶

These views that have been presented indicate in some measure the problem involved in trying to find a completely satisfactory solution to the differences in the accounts of Christian baptism in the book of Acts. It is discovered that these divergences on baptism in Acts are grouped according to the way the rite is related to the laying on of hands

⁴⁴ Op. cit., p. 623

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 623.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 623f.

and the gift of the Holy Spirit. When all due allowance is made in the facts set forth in the diversity of evidence in Acts, it remains true that it is taken for granted that all Christians were baptized in water and that faith, water-baptism, and the Spirit go together.⁴⁷

In addition to those passages that are treated above there are other references in Acts which mention baptism without any reference to the Spirit and laying on of hands.⁴⁸ In all of these there is a relationship between baptism and "believing," "hearing," and "receiving the word." It is worthwhile to note that in Peter's speech at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 stress is laid on "hearing the word of the Gospel" (verse 7), "believing" (verse 7), "giving them the Holy Spirit" (verse 8), "faith" (verse 9), and salvation "through the grace of our Lord Jesus" (verse 11). It is held by some⁴⁹ that Acts 9:18 is to be classed with the view that shows a relationship between the imposition of hands and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but it is not clear in this passage whether Ananias places his hands upon Paul for the purpose of curing him of his blindness or to impart the gift of the Holy

47 A. E. J. Rawlinson, "Church, Baptism and Eucharist in the New Testament," The Ministry and the Sacraments, edited by Dunkerley and Headlam, p. 295.

48 Simon Magus 8:13; the Ethiopian eunuch 8:36-38; Lydia 16:15; the Philippian jailor 16:33; the Corinthians 18:8; and the Apostle Paul 9:18 and 22:16.

49 Flemington, op. cit., p. 40, et. al.

Spirit.⁵⁰ In all probability the former is correct.⁵¹ It is evident that for the early disciples baptism symbolized the Gospel and was the embodiment of the kerygma of the early Church.

2. Summary of the Teaching of Acts on Baptism.

Baptism, as has already been noted, occupied an important place in the witness and practice of the early Church. A review of the evidence already submitted reveals certain characteristics of the doctrine and practice in the book of Acts.

a. The formula "in the name of Jesus Christ" or "in the name of the Lord Jesus" is the new factor in the baptismal rite that differentiates Christian baptism from John's baptism.⁵² It is baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" which distinguishes the message of Peter from the message of John the Baptist on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). It is also

50 Lambert, op. cit., p. 133.

51 R. J. Knowling, The Acts of the Apostles, (Greek Expositor's Testament), in loco.

52 Baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" is found in Acts 2:38 and 10:48; whereas, in Acts 8:16 and 19:5 it is "into the name of the Lord Jesus." F. H. Ely, "The Lord's Command to Baptize," J. T. S., Vol. 8, 1907, pp. 172-177 and others try to make a great claim for ἐν as opposed to εἰς. There is no basis for such a conclusion because the prepositions are used interchangeably in the Koine period of Greek. Cf. J. H. Moulton, Prolegomena to New Testament Greek, p. 63. J. A. Robinson, "Baptism," E. B., Vol. I, col. 473, thinks "in the name of" is a Hebraism בְּשֵׁם as in the baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19 and due to the Syriac having ܩܕܝܫ.

baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus" that makes valid the baptism of the twelve disciples at Ephesus and causes them to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:5f). "By the utterance of the name Jesus," says Wernle, "a Christian character was imparted to the rite."⁵³

What is the significance of being baptized "into the name of the Lord Jesus?" The meaning has been sought by some in analogies afforded by the papyri and inscriptions. Deissmann thinks that the special coloring which ὄνομα has in the early Christian writings was strongly influenced by the LXX, but rather than first being borrowed from the Hebrew, it was "a portion of what they took from the adulatory official vocabulary of their environment."⁵⁴ He holds that the current usage in Asia Minor was the connecting link for the solemn formula of the early Christians.

Deissmann cites an inscription of the imperial period which is as follows: γενομένης δὲ τῆς ὥνῃς τῶν προγεγραμμένων τοῖς κτηματῶναις εἰς τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὄνομα.⁵⁵ This inscription is translated: "after the sale of the aforementioned objects had been concluded with the purchasers of the article

53 Paul Wernle, The Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. I, p. 132f.

54 G. Adolf Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 146.

55 Ibid., p. 146f. In the Inscription of Mylasa in Caria, Waddington iii. 2, No. 416 CIG. ii, no. 2693e; also CIG ii, 2694b from Mylasa.

in the name of God." The testimony of the papyri examples indicates that in the Graeco-Roman world generally, a name stood for the person who bore it. There was a mysterious virtue that was assigned to the names of the divine beings, so that whoever invoked the name of the god was brought into a certain relationship with the god.⁵⁶

Certain scholars interpret the invocation of the name in the light of superstitious ideas. They have seen the analogies discovered in the papyri and have argued that "in the name" or "into the name" of Jesus is fully explained from the magical ideas that seeped into Christianity from the pagan world. Heitmüller regards the connection of a person's name with his personality and power which a knowledge of his name gives one over him.⁵⁷ In reference to a god the name is part of the god's being and one has only to pronounce it in order to have his power at one's disposal. By pronouncing the name of Jesus over the believer the power and spirit of Jesus were imparted to the convert and the convert was placed under Jesus' protection, being stamped as Jesus' property analogous

56 Hopwood, op. cit., p. 282.

57 W. Heitmüller, In Namen Jesu, pp. 266-335 and Taufe und Abendmahl im Urchristentum, pp. 11-12; Cf. J. Weiss, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 634ff.; J. E. Carpenter, op. cit., pp. 233f. Heitmüller in Taufe, p. 12 says "Die nennung des Jesu-Namens bei der Taufe hatte also einen tiefen Sinn: die Tauflinge wurden dadurch zum Eigentum Jesu Christi versiegelt. Und zugleich wurden sie unter seinen Schutz gestellt. Aber noch mehr verrät uns diese Handlung über den Sinn der Taufe."

to the practice of the pagans of tattooing the god's name on the body of a devotee.

Though superstitious ideas connected with the name of Jesus did creep into the Church, there is no sufficient evidence to support the belief of Heitmuller that it was as current as the first century.⁵⁸ Hopwood, who holds that the ideas from the magical papyri are not authoritative for the explanation of the formula used by the primitive Church, makes the following statement:

The Church was expressing the vital religious experience which centered in Jesus. The ancient world had no knowledge of the deity walking the earth in human incarnation, making disciples, and inspiring the formation of any community called by the name of such a deity. The primitive Church, however, had the inspired remembrance of, and contact with the personal Jesus into whose name they baptized the converts.⁵⁹

Hopwood turns to the Old Testament to seek an explanation for the phrase used in the early Church and cites a number of examples showing the meaning of "the name."⁶⁰ He discovers that it means an indication of the character of a man (I Sam. 25:25), a token of ownership (I Sam. 17:4; II Sam. 12:28; Isaiah 4:1), a designation for God (Gen. 4:26; 12:8; II Sam. 7:12), and a designation of ownership by God (Jer. 7:10; 15:16

⁵⁸ Morgan, op. cit., p. 204.

⁵⁹ Hopwood, op. cit., pp. 282f.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 283-285.

to individuals; and Deut. 28:10 to Israel as a nation). The idea progresses until the "name" embodies the revealed character of the Lord (Ex. 34:14).

From these and other Old Testament passages he has cited, Hopwood concludes that the Semitic and the Hellenistic meaning on "the name" coincide in denoting possession by the owner of the name. He stresses the necessity, and correctly so, for seeing the baptismal experience of the early Church in the light of the religious background from the Old Testament rather than Hellenistic experience even though there may be a correspondence of ideas. The utterance of "the name" meant on the part of the believer a confession of faith in Jesus as Messiah and Lord, and on the part of the administrator of the rite a declaration that henceforth the convert belonged to Him.⁶¹ Weiss thinks that baptism "in the name of Christ" took on a greater meaning in Antioch than it did in the Jerusalem Church.⁶²

b. What is the teaching of Acts of baptism in relation to repentance, faith, and forgiveness of sins? The two preliminary conditions of faith and repentance were demanded of each candidate for baptism. In Acts 2:38 repentance is expressed and faith is implied, but more often the reverse is

61 Morgan, op. cit., p. 205; J. Weiss, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 177f.

62 Ibid., p. 177.

true that faith is expressed while repentance is implied.⁶³ In these passages that do not mention repentance it is assumed that the condition is present.⁶⁴ In Acts 2:37-41 is there any indication that faith and repentance were conditions to baptism which saves, or is it clear that they were the essential means of salvation and baptism was the symbol and seal of that reality? Probably the best help towards an answer comes from remembering John's baptism with which the disciples were acquainted. It has been shown that it was merely a symbol, so this would be an indication of the same use for the Apostles, and it would mean that baptism was not the medium of salvation.⁶⁵

In Acts 3:19 and 4:4 there is no demand made upon the people to be baptized. This does not indicate that baptism was not required, but would imply that baptism was not the medium of salvation. If baptism had been the central concern, then surely the author would have mentioned it in any case. In the narrative about Cornelius it is apparent that baptism could not have been the means of salvation because the verification that they were in Christ came before baptism with the gift of the Holy Spirit. The twelve disciples at

63 Acts 8:12; 10:43; 16:15; 16:31, 33; 18:8.

64 Marsh, op. cit., p. 173.

65 J. C. Lambert, op. cit., p. 87.

Ephesus certainly would have been baptized previously "into the name of the Lord Jesus" had it been considered that baptism was a means of salvation. It is further noticed on the relation between faith and baptism that the members of the early Christian community were referred to as "those who believed" and not as "those who were baptized." The Christians were also called "brother," "disciples," and "saints," but never as "the baptized."

The baptism of John and Christian baptism are characterized by *εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν* "unto a remission of sins." It would seem that Peter took over the message of the Baptist and adapted it to the Christian message. Very few would admit that the baptism of John amounted to the actual impartation of forgiveness. Those who attempt to discover in the phrase used by Peter evidence for the forgiveness of sins effected in Christian baptism, "require considerable ingenuity to interpret the same three words in two entirely different ways."⁶⁶ The relationship between baptism and forgiveness in the early Church is the same relationship that was noticed in connection with John's rite. The baptism points to a remission of sins.⁶⁷ Neither John nor Peter showed that baptism of itself brought forgiveness of sins. The author of Acts in his Gospel does

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

⁶⁷ Vide Acts 2:37-38; 10:43; 13:38; 22:16; also Knowling, op. cit., p. 91.

not suggest that Jesus demanded any other condition of forgiveness than the repentance of a contrite heart, so he could not possibly think that baptism of itself effected forgiveness of sins.

c. A third teaching which is related in some cases to the baptismal act is the laying on of hands and the reception of the Spirit. Concerning the origin of the imposition of hands, as a rite associated with baptism in the early Church, the New Testament casts no light at all. In all probability it "is a piece of Jewish symbolism, for which no word of Christ can be cited, adopted to express union between the new believer and the holy community."⁶⁸ The practice is frequently mentioned in various connections in the Old Testament.⁶⁹ It was used as a blessing (Gen. 48:14, 17), in the designation of a successor such as Moses to Joshua (Deut. 34:9), and the "presenting" of the Levites (Num. 8:10). In the New Testament the imposition of hands was used with a variety of intentions as healing the sick (Mark 1:40ff; 5:23; 8:22f and parallels),⁷⁰ as an act of blessing (Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 24:50:, and as a

68 J. V. Bartlet, "Baptism (New Testament)," E. R. E., Vol. II, p. 376.

69 For a fuller treatment of this subject see the following: Silva New, "The Name, Baptism, and the Laying on of Hands," Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. V., Note XI, pp. 121-140; Flemington, op. cit., p. 44, n. 1.

70 Vide also Acts 9:17 (Ananias places his hands on Paul in all probability to cure him of his blindness and not to impart the Holy Spirit); Acts 28:8 (Paul heals the father of Publius by laying on his hands).

gesture of ordination for special service in the Christian community (Acts 6:6 and 13:1). In Acts 8:16 and 19:1f it seems that the imposition of hands is the direct cause of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the case of the imposition of hands in Samaria by Peter and John, is this to be considered as formal authority of an Apostolic College that administers a sacrament of confirmation which could only be imparted by the Apostles? Such an idea is read into it in a later age, but there is nothing that indicates such here. In the Didache and Justin Martyr there is no mentioning of the laying on of hands. Later on Tertullian mentions it in De Baptismo VIII and says that the derivation is from the sacramental rite in which Jacob blessed his grandsons that were born to Joseph.

d. Cullman has made a study of the use of *κωλύειν* in Acts 8:36; 10:47; 11:17; and Matthew 3:14 and concluded that this reflects a part of an early formula which is somewhat similar to that of a marriage ceremony.⁷¹ He thinks that the formula 'What hinders?' with the answer 'Nothing hinders' comes from Jewish Christianity where it had to be made certain that one was circumcised before he could receive Christian

71 Oscar Cullmann, Le Baptême des enfants, pp. 63-69: "Nous pensons donc que les textes cités relevant l'existence d'une des plus vieilles formules baptismals ... ces éléments ont probablement leur origine dans le judéo-christianisme qui était préoccupé de ne pas admettre au baptême des païens sans la circoncision." p. 69.

baptism. This is indeed an interesting hypothesis, but it has little evidence for its support.

e. What is the practice of baptism in the primitive Church? Hatch observes that in the earliest times that baptism followed immediately upon conversion and it was of the simplest kind of ritual with no need of a special minister.⁷² There is nothing said about the place for baptism nor the kind of water to be used. There is no evidence that there was any type of instruction of the candidate before baptism, unless the interpretation of the Scriptures to the Ethiopian eunuch be so considered. Some have seen in the baptisms of households in Acts a case for infant baptism,⁷³ but a household does not necessarily include infants. This meager statement gives no solid foundation for asserting that Acts recognizes infant baptism. Though the mode of baptism is not clearly stated, immersion is implied from the use of βαπτίζω and the reference to the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:36-38 where κατέβησαν ἀμφότεροι εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ "they both went down into the water" and ἀνέβησαν ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος "they went up out of the water."

72 Edwin Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church, p. 294.

73 Marsh, op. cit., p. 176; Plummer, op. cit., H. D. B., Vol. I, p. 242; et al.

Chapter II

BAPTISM IN PAUL'S EPISTLES

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The Apostle Paul works out the meaning of baptism more fully than that which is presented in Acts. One is justified in saying that baptism in Acts appears more as a practice, but in Paul's Epistles it takes on the appearance of a doctrine. Paul's great contribution to the doctrine of baptism was the opening up of profounder depths and implications of meaning for the Christian. The theology of Paul was a theology of experience, but it rested upon tradition as well as experience and that specifically upon the early Christian tradition. It turns for its support and elucidation to the Old Testament, to reason, imagination, poetry, analogy, rhetoric, and to whatever will convey to some extent the overwhelming, transcendent significance of the new life in Christ.

Though Paul's teaching on baptism begins from the common basis of the primitive Judaeo-Christian thought, it goes farther in its inwardness and psychological analysis than the teaching of baptism in Acts. To enter into Paul's meaning of baptism means to enter the very souls of primitive Christians and share their experiences. To Paul baptism means incorporation into Christ and so a member of His Body (I Cor. 12:13), a putting on of Christ (Gal. 3:27), a death, burial, and resurrection with Christ (Romans 6:3ff and Col. 2:12f).

There are those who think that in a study of the doctrine and practice of baptism in Paul's Epistles one should begin with the accounts in Acts where baptism is linked either with the experience of Paul or with his missionary work.¹ Such an investigation is not necessary for an interpretation of Paul's teaching since the author of Acts would not be as reliable a source as Paul himself. It is noticed that in Acts there are three accounts of Paul's conversion, but his baptism is related in only two of these (Acts 9 and 22). There are four occasions where baptism was employed in connection with Paul's missionary work.²

Paul uses the substantive βαπτισμα three times and the verb βαπτίζω thirteen times in his Epistles. The verb ἀπολούομαι occurs once and also the substantive λουτρόν once. There are three uses of the verb σφραγίζομαι by Paul which may allude to baptism. Paul makes no attempt to explain the origin of baptism as he does the Lord's Supper in I Cor. 11:23ff. He takes the rite for granted and presents his doctrine of baptism not as a systematic treatment because he is writing to Christians who have undergone the rite and are supposed to be familiar with its essential meaning. The

1 Lambert, op.cit., pp. 128 ff; also F. J. Leenhardt, Le Baptême chrétien, pp. 45f.

2 Acts 16:14,15; 16:30-34; 18:8; and 19:1-7.

contexts of the passages where baptism is mentioned by Paul are for the most part those where Paul is challenging his readers to higher Christian living and he uses baptism as an illustration of that challenge.

It is quite evident that at a very early date Christianity became sacramentarian. Did this departure from the primitive Christian Church begin with the Apostle Paul? The chief difficulty in stating that Paul was the first Christian sacramentarian lies in the central place of faith-mysticism in Paul's own life and teaching which was neither "induced by nor dependent on sacramental operations".³ If sacramentalism had been a Pauline innovation one can feel certain that Paul would have been more emphatic about it. Baptism was one of those things that he had "received" in the tradition of the Christians who were before him.

According to certain scholars Paul believed that a person was brought into a mystical fellowship with Christ by means of baptism which was thought of as working in some sense ex opere operato.⁴ In other words they consider Paul's

3 S. Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World P. 202.

4 K. Lake, The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul, p. 385; A. Loisy, Les Mystères Païens et Le Mystère Chrétien, p. 276; W. Heitmüller, Taufe und Abendmahl bei Paulus, pp. 14f. and Taufe und Abendmahl im Urchristentum, p. 18; H. Weinel; St. Paul, The Man and His Work, p. 120f.; P. Wernle, The Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. I, p. 273; Otto Pfleiderer, Primitive Christianity, Vol. I, p. 414f and Vol. IV, p. 238 n.1.; W. Bousset, Kurios Christos, p. 107f. et al.

interpretation of baptism as possessing a truly sacramental or magical character similar to the ablutions practised by the mystery cults. But is one justified in saying that baptism experienced a transformation at the hands of Paul? Did it actually pass into a magic effect as these hold? It is quite true that Paul may have paved the way for the sacramentarianism of the following age,⁵ but evidence is lacking for Paul's changing Christianity into a Mystery-Religion and transforming the primitive rites into magical ex opere operato sacraments in vogue in the Church from the end of the first century and prominent in Ignatius and Irenaeus.⁶

Wernle holds that it was Paul who first created the conception of baptism as a sacrament:

It was Paul who first created the conception of a sacrament. Any external acts - here bathing, eating, and drinking - are turned into sacraments as soon as they are esteemed to be means of salvation. They are thereby stamped as something different from what they really are: the element of mystery and the miraculous takes possession of them, they come to be instruments of divine power. This result St. Paul achieved in the case of baptism and the Lord's Supper.⁷

Weiss feels that the germs of later Catholic sacramentarianism are already in Paul, but he is very cautious about reading too

5 E.F. Scott, The Apologetic of the New Testament, p. 132.

6 S. Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 205f.

7 Wernle, op.cit., p. 273.

much of this into Paul's Epistles since "it does not play the decisive role in the mysticism of redemption as is frequently assumed."⁸ He shows that in Gal. 3:27 the putting on of Christ is accomplished in and with baptism but since alongside this appears the imperative "Put ye on the Lord Jesus" in Romans 13:14, "the idea of sacramental union could not have been entertained in complete earnest and regarded as paramount; at least the idea that the mystical union could be accomplished only by the sacrament is excluded."⁹ The hypothesis of a real sacrament is that it presents something which cannot be attained in any other way. This is foreign to the mind of Paul for his view of salvation.

In recent years attempts have been made to explain what is interpreted as the sacramental teaching of Paul from the teachings of the mystery cults.¹⁰ It has already been noted that the mystery cults had rites that were similar to Christian baptism.¹¹ It was also noted in that connection that there were more differences than similarities. Attempts have been made to

8 Weiss, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 638f.

9 Ibid., p. 639.

10 Reitzenstein, Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, 2nd ed., pp. 66ff.; Pfleiderer, op.cit., Vol. IV, p. 238, n.1.; Lake, op.cit., pp. 389-390; et al.

11 Supra, pp. 26ff.

connect baptism with the dying and rising of the mysteries, but there is no evidence for such.¹² For there is lacking in the mysteries certain elements fundamental to Paul's view of dying and rising with Christ.¹³ There is evidence for a rebirth in the mysteries but Paul does not deal with the term. The greatest difference between Paul's teaching and Hellenistic teaching on baptism was in the ethical realm. The chief emphasis of Hellenistic religions was not moral and ethical.¹⁴ While it may be wrong to deny all ethical significance to the mysteries, "it was not their strong point."¹⁵ It can be safely assumed that the impact of the mysteries formed part of the milieu into which Paul brought his Gospel and that the practices of the mysteries were suggestive as a practical method of mysticism. It is possible that he re-interpreted the old practices of baptism in the light of this experience and opened the way for further developments in the sacramental direction, but "with Paul the sacraments are mystical rather than magical, symbolical rather than miracle-working, and secondary to the spiritual and ethical elements of faith."¹⁶

12 Nock, op.cit., p. 116; W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 91.

13 Ibid., p. 91; A. Schweitzer, Paul and His Interpreters, p. 210.

14 Flemington, op.cit., p. 78.

15 Davies, op.cit., p. 91.

16 Bulcock, The Passing and the Permanent in St. Paul, p. 34.

A magic effect in baptism attributed to the Apostle Paul is discounted by certain facts which are too obvious to overlook. The Pauline doctrine of faith by itself is evidence sufficient to prove that he did not accept ritual as the sole means of cleansing from sin or obtaining any benefits associated with salvation. The theme of the Epistle to the Romans is a right relationship with God by faith. This theme is stated at the very beginning of the epistle¹⁷ and continued with chief emphasis until the chapter where the reference to baptism is found.¹⁸ If Paul introduces baptism in this epistle as a magical efficacious rite, then his whole argument for a right relationship with God by faith has been for nothing. Also it would mean that he had not vindicated his position against those who accused his Gospel of antinomian tendencies, because "it is no real defence against antinomian inferences from Paul's teaching to say that, although faith does not contain within itself the provision for a walk in newness of life, such a provision may be had by submitting to the rite of baptism."¹⁹ The conclusion of this would be that faith may bring one into a right relationship with God, but does not bring him into union with Christ and for that reason faith itself would be antinomian and leads to

17 Romans 1:17.

18 Romans 3:22; 3:26; 3:28; 3:30; 4:5; 5:1.

19 Lambert, op.cit., p. 171.

antinomian results. Even in the sixth chapter of Romans where the reference to baptism occurs there is the use of the verb πιστεύομεν²⁰ which emphasizes Paul's theme again. It is noticed that the context of Galations 3:27 is that of faith.²¹

It is practically beyond question that Paul in I Cor. 10:1-4 alludes to Christian baptism and the Lord's Supper. Paul is here warning the Christians in Corinth by a parallel drawn from Hebrew history that "no sacramental act achieves anything unless it is an outward symbol of what really happens inwardly in experience."²² Loisy, who holds that Paul considered the rite of baptism as magical, admits that this passage is a warning that the sacraments will not preserve from reprobation those Christians who sin as the Israelites sinned in the desert.²³ This passage is possibly Rabbinic interpretation.²⁴ Here Paul looks upon the events of the beginning of Israel's history as analogous to the experiences connected with Christian baptism.²⁵ The Israelites were baptized into Moses as the Christians were baptized into Christ. The Christians constitute the "New Israel"

20 Romans 6:8.

21 This will be treated at length later in the thesis.

22 C.H. Dodd, The Meaning of Paul for Today, p. 119.

23 A. Loisy, The Birth of the Christian Religion, p. 237.

24 Davies, op.cit., p. 105; L.S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ, pp. 325, 333; and James Moffatt, I Corinthians, M.N.T.C., pp. 129ff.

25 W.L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 97.

of God and there is an analogy to the "Old Israel" of God. As the "Old Israel" could not depend upon this baptism into Moses for their right relationship with God but must have a new life which is demonstrated by ethical consequences, so it is impossible for the Christian to depend upon the sacraments as security in being on a right relationship with God apart from ethical consequences.

The context of I Cor. 10:1-4 does not at all indicate that a magic union was accomplished and established in baptism. The statement that "all were baptized into Moses" speaks against a magical significance that some scholars attribute to the Pauline meaning of baptism, "for we cannot conceive the implication of some mystic relationship established between the people and Moses by these events in their history."²⁶ However, it is clear from the passage that the Corinthians themselves were looking upon the rite in some magical efficacious way.²⁷ The warning is that sacraments in themselves do not avail unless there is obedience to faith.

When Paul was in Ephesus, he received the information from "those of Chloe" that there was a schism in the church at Corinth. Certain groups had rallied themselves under the name of Christian leaders as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. The first part of

26 H.A.A. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, p. 236

27 Morgan, op.cit., p. 211 says that from I Cor. 10:1ff it is evident that sacramental ideas were prevalent in the Church, but "it does not follow that the Apostle shared them." The evidence is that he opposed them.

I Corinthians is devoted to this immediate problem in the Church and there is an urgent plea from Paul that the party spirit be abandoned. In his plea for unity in the Church he brings up the matter of the practice of baptism by him among them in I Cor. 1:13-17:

Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

The implication of the verse "or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" is that the converts were baptized into the name of Christ and not in his own name. Though Weiss says that there is great potency connected with the sacred name pronounced at baptism, he denies that baptism is a magical rite for Paul by I Cor. 1:13 which is "a certain hesitation between the sacramental and symbolical mode of thought."²⁸

28 J. Weiss, op.cit., Vol.II, p. 636. Weiss on I Cor. 1:16 says that the words mean "that Paul, in addition to the gift of revival preaching which was peculiar to him, did not possess in the same degree the gift which manifested itself in baptism. One is furthermore to assume from this that a baptizer's duty was not simply to perform an outward function to be accomplished without further ado, but that the ceremony also possessed a richer liturgical setting. In particular, we may consider that the invocation of the Name of Jesus demanded in the tone and method of the exorcist a certain attempt to produce an ecstatic or suggestible condition in order to secure corresponding effects in the participants, and that Paul's peculiar gifts and inclinations were not adopted to this. This deficiency of his nature he considered to be a limitation of his task; to us it is a sign that the state of exorcism related to the baptismal act does not at all appeal to him." op.cit., Vol.II, p.636. Weiss reads more into this passage than is actually found there. It is extremely doubtful if Paul felt that he was lacking in any of the spiritual gifts. He could boast on visions (II Cor. 12:1ff) and also he speaks in more tongues than all those at Corinth (I Cor. 14:18). It seems that Weiss has been greatly influenced by Heitmüller.

Paul is glad that he has baptized only a few of them. Paul seems to have confined his ministry to the preaching of the Gospel and left baptism to church leaders. It may be that this was the ministry of Silas and Timothy and the reason that Paul baptized Gaius, Crispus, and the household of Stephanas was the absence of Silas and Timothy at the very beginning of his ministry at Corinth. From the statement "I thank God that I baptized none of you" one is not to infer that Paul considers baptism as insignificant. On the contrary, it is because of his lofty conception of baptism that makes him dread to see it debased by party strife at Corinth, and causes him to give thanks since the schism in the church cannot be intensified by some saying that they had been baptized by him and so in his name rather than the name of Christ. It is possible that there were those who were saying that their baptism was more valid since Apollos baptized them and did not leave the rite to others as Paul had done.

The reason that Paul gives for not baptizing is "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Here Paul definitely distinguishes baptism from the preaching of the Gospel and subordinates baptism to the Gospel. From this passage it seems evident that it is impossible to say that Paul added a mysterious, supernatural, efficacious idea to baptism. Though Lietzmann holds that the people in the church at Corinth held to "formalistic sacramentarianism" because to them the baptizer was important, and though he believes Paul had some sacramental mysticism connected with the rite, he also thinks that for Paul

all sacramental mysticisms, like all pneumatic enthusiasms, were secondary.²⁹ He further contends that even though Paul was able to value baptism as a means for raising moral achievement, he would make it fall into the background as soon as it endangered his objective.³⁰

The evidence presented justifies one in saying that Paul did not regard baptism as a magical rite. Truly Paul was the "first and almost the last theologian of the early church with whom sacramental theology was really held in check by clear ideas and strictly spiritual considerations."³¹ After his day all the "flood-gates" were opened, and the mysteries poured in with their lore.

If Paul's doctrine of baptism is not to be regarded as magical, neither is it to be considered a hollow symbol. Baptism for the apostle means more than a mere symbol. Kennedy says that it "is far more than a symbol of spiritual processes"³² and agrees with Bartlet who affirms that for Paul baptism "is a symbol conditioning a present deeper and decisive experience of the Divine grace, already embraced by faith. But all is psychologically conditioned, being thereby raised above the

29 H. Lietzmann, The Beginnings of the Christian Church, p. 186.

30 Ibid., p. 186.

31 A. Harnack, The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries, Vol. I, p. 230.

32 H.A.A. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, p. 254.

level of the magical or quasi-physical conception of sacramental grace."³³ Baptism becomes the objective aspect by which the mystical relationship with Christ is established, but faith alone is the means by which one receives the Spirit and enters into the mystical fellowship.³⁴ Because of the fear that the teaching of the Apostle Paul on baptism may approach a magical idea, faith many times is completely separated from the symbol which is expressive of faith.³⁵ It is safe to assume that for Paul baptism became "an 'effective symbol' for producing a change in the character of the believer."³⁶ It becomes effective only as the individual comes to the rite with a mind prepared to receive God.

The Apostle Paul sees in Christian baptism a union with Christ, a symbol of unity in the Christian fellowship, and an act of purification. The prevailing thought of Paul in connection with baptism is the mystical union with Christ.

1. Union with Christ.

The most characteristic expression used by the Apostle to describe the nature of the Christian is $\epsilon\nu\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omega$. It is

33 Bartlet, op.cit., E.R.E., Vol. II, p. 377.

34 W.H.P. Hatch, The Pauline Idea of Faith, Harvard Theological Studies, II, 1917, p. 44.

35 Flemington, op.cit., p. 81.

36 Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 98.

impossible in this thesis to go into a thorough study of this formula; nevertheless, the formula must be understood because in all probability Paul arrived at the expression from his own baptismal experience, or if it is not peculiar to Paul, it is the teaching of the Church derived from the experience of the Christians. Deissmann has pointed out that Paul uses this phrase and cognate expressions some 164 times in his Epistles (Deissmann includes the Pastorals), but it does not occur in the Gospels or Acts. In his first study of $\epsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$ Deissmann concluded that the expression in all places referred to a local or mystical sense,³⁷ but later he admitted that this was an exaggeration because "there are, for example, passages where it is used in a really formal sense. And it may reasonably be assumed that the Christ-intimacy of the Apostle itself had also its differing degrees of elevation."³⁸ In contrast to the formula $\epsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$ Deissmann discovered several expressions used by Paul to express old spheres in which he had been before he came into Christ.³⁹ These spheres are "in the flesh" (Romans 7:5; 8:8,9), "in sins" (I Cor. 15:17), "in the law" (Galatians 5:4), "in the world" (Ephesians 2:12), "in sufferings" (II Cor. 6:4).

37 A. Deissmann, Die neutestamentliche Formel 'in Christo Jesu', p. 12.

38 Deissmann, St. Paulus, pp. 141f.

39 Deissmann, The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul, p. 172.

There are some who hold that the basis for the doctrine of the mystical union with Christ was in Paul's experience with Christ, and he has created the expression.⁴⁰ While Marsh holds that the idea may be peculiar to Paul, he does bring up the question as to whether Paul contributed this to the teaching of the early Church or whether it was already in the Christian tradition from the Vine and Branches expression in the Fourth Gospel (John 15) and from the use of baptism by Jesus in a metaphorical sense signifying his death in Luke 12:50 and Mark 10:38f.⁴¹ Marsh suggests that Paul arrived at his idea of union with Christ through the early church teaching of the gift of the Spirit at baptism.⁴² This is quite possible, though it is also credible that Paul did not coin the expression but discovered it in the primitive Christian tradition.⁴³ However, it may be that the real force and the full implications of the formula escaped the minds of the early apostles and Paul alone was fully conscious of them. It is not incredible to suppose that the expressions $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$ and $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ are the shortened form of the

40 Marsh, op.cit., p.139; Sanday and Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans, I.C.C., p. 162; H. Holtzmann, "Die Taufe im Neuen Testament", Z.W.T., 1879, p. 406; McGiffert, op.cit., p. 541; and Deissmann, The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul, p. 171.

41 Op.cit., p. 142. Also Deissmann while holding the formula is a creation of Paul says that there are related ideas from Acts 4:2; 4:9,10,12,13; John 6:56; John 14:20,30; John 15:2-7; John 16:33; John 17:21; I John 2:5,6,8,24,27,28; I John 3:6,24; I John 5:11,20.

42 Op.cit., p.141.

43 A.E.J. Rawlinson, The New Testament Doctrine of Christ, p.160 n.l.; Cf. also J. Weiss, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.463ff.

baptismal formula "into the name of Christ".⁴⁴ The meaning of ἐν χριστῷ would then be definitely connected with baptism and show that the believer was possessed by Christ.⁴⁵

Since this mystical language seems strange within the primitive Church, it is easy to assume a borrowing or a dependence upon the Hellenistic mode of thought and feeling.⁴⁶ But the attempt to prove that here Paul is using mystery ideas rests on very flimsy evidence. It is admitted that this union with Christ appears to be more identified with pagan mysteries than Judaism, yet there is no real resemblance between Paul's idea of dying and rising with Christ and the dying and rebirth in the pagan mysteries.⁴⁷

Paul's use of the expression ἐν χριστῷ and cognate phrases has often been understood as the blessed feeling of sinking one's ego into the depths of the divine and the mystic flight of the alone to the alone. This mysticism of Paul is not a state of ecstasy which was peculiar to the mystery cults because he assigns such experiences of his own to a secondary place in his religious life, i.e. II Cor. 12:2-5.⁴⁸ It is also impossible to attribute

44 A. Loisy, Les Mystères Païens et Le Mystère Chrétien, p. 270, n.2.

45 Vide supra, pp. 127ff. for discussion "into the name".

46 J. Weiss, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 463.

47 Marsh, op.cit., p. 140; Davies, op.cit., p. 90; Nock, op.cit., p. 116.

48 Davies, op.cit., p. 87.

to Paul ecstatic mystical experiences for the meaning of union with Christ because of the ethical emphasis which he gives to his message. For one who is engaged in ethical tension there is no room for a mystic flight of the alone to the alone. It has already been pointed out that it would be hard to rule out completely the ethical significance of the mystery cults but it was not one of their strong points. Hence, it is obvious that the idea of union with Christ is not only an individual experience but is also social by which to be "in Christ" means to be in the true Israel of God. While the mysteries emphasize the individual to the neglect of the social content in the experience in union with a god, Schweitzer emphasizes the social content to the apparent neglect of the individual experience.⁴⁹ He holds that it is not completely by belief that the quasi-physical solidarity with Christ is achieved but this union is achieved by baptism. Schweitzer by this position violates the central teaching of faith by Paul.

It is quite evident that this $\epsilon\chi\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ relationship of the believer, both individual as well as social, begins at baptism. There are three passages where this idea seems very clearly set forth.⁵⁰ It is true that the expression $\epsilon\chi\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ does not occur in either of these passages, but in the baptismal experiences

49 A. Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, pp. 101f.

50 Romans 6:3ff; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12.

in Romans 6 and Galations 3 the strong words $\sigma\upsilon\mu\phi\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota$ and $\epsilon\upsilon\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon$ are used which indicate a union with Christ.⁵¹ Also in Romans 6 and Colossians 2 baptism is related to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and the believer shares in this in baptism, thereby undergoing an identity of experience with Christ.

a. Romans 6:3ff. The classic source for information not only of Paul's teaching on baptism, but also for its connection with union with Christ is discovered in the sixth chapter of Romans. Romans 6:3ff can be understood only by the argument that leads up to it. It has already been stated that a right relationship with God on the basis of faith is the theme of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In chapter 4 Paul proves to his Jewish readers that a right relationship does not exist through the law, but if they will go far enough back in their review of the teaching of the law, they will discover that Abraham's right relationship with God was on the basis of faith (Romans 4:1ff.). In chapter 5 after introducing his thoughts with the central position of faith for a right relationship with God, Paul tells of the access of sin through Adam and the consequent dominion of sin. This is followed by showing that access to God is through faith in Christ. He makes good his position that salvation does not come by human achievement of righteousness in obedience to a

51 $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$, which is equivalent to $\epsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\bar{\omega}$, is used in Romans 6:3. Also $\sigma\upsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\bar{\omega}$ is found in Romans 6:8. $\epsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\bar{\omega}$ does occur in Romans 6:11; Galations 3:26,28.

code of precepts but by faith. He shows how the universal sway of sin had issued in good in that it had made manifest the great redemption of God and had given the reign of grace. He brings to a climax this line of thought with "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Romans 5:20). Paul realized that this aphorism would be open to misunderstanding. He had already indicated as much in Romans 3:7-8 but dismissed the thought for a later explanation. Now he must make clear his position. He is answering a false conclusion that may be drawn from 5:20 and asks the question, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" If grace is so essential, the natural conclusion is that one should go on sinning to get more grace. Paul is afraid that they would take a lax view towards sin and become libertines in their morals. Therefore he challenges the statement of his imaginary objectors and rejects such a conclusion.

Paul's method for meeting such an inference for lax living to obtain more grace is to penetrate more radically into the nature of the Christian experience itself and to point out how unreasonable it was to think that anyone who had saving faith should continue in sin. He begins from a consideration of baptism and shows how it by its very symbolism condemns such an idea (Romans 6:1-14). This is followed by the two analogies, slavery and marriage (Romans 6:15-7:6). Leaving analogies Paul proceeds to the psychological analysis of what actually happens to a man who is saved. From this he goes on to a discussion on

the new life in Christ as one which is controlled by the indwelling Spirit of God (Romans 8:1-13).

Paul recalls to the minds of his readers the meaning of baptism. He reminds them that a Christian is one who at a particular moment died.⁵² This point action of death is further shown, though not in a baptismal context, in Galations 5:24. Duncan says of this verse "the tense of the Greek verb makes it plain that he is ... referring, not to a process of spiritual 'crucifixion' continued throughout life, but to an act consummated at a definite moment of time. In short, he is referring to what took place at baptism."⁵³ Baptism then means for the Apostle the re-enactment of what happened to Christ. Being plunged into the water the believer demonstrates a dying with Christ, he remains and is buried, he emerges and is raised with Christ. On the basis of this Paul shows that it is ridiculous for one to even suppose that he could go on in sin after baptism.

The introduction of verse 3 is "Know ye not?" It is inferred from this that the view was already current in Rome and thereby independent of Paul since he at this time had never

52 The use of the aorist ἀπεθόνημεν means point action and Paul has a particular moment in mind.

53 G.S. Duncan, Galations, M.N.T.C., p. 176.

visited Rome.⁵⁴ Weiss feels that this particular view of baptism may not be original with Paul, but that Paul deals with baptism as he does with other universally known ideas of the Church.⁵⁵ He also believes that the sayings of Jesus in Mark 10:38f and Luke 12:50, where baptism is treated metaphorically, show that a martyr death is called a baptism. He goes on to say with reference to the martyr death as baptism that "this would hardly be possible if they had not at this time looked on baptism as a 'dying' and, we might venture to add, as a beginning of a new life."⁵⁶ Thus it may be true that even in the primitive Church baptism was considered as a mystical union with Christ into a new life. It is quite possible that Paul developed the idea further than his contemporaries.

In this passage Paul uses the great events of the Passion to explain the transformation of his own life and the lives of others which had been accomplished through union with Christ by faith. In Christ's name the believer is plunged beneath the baptismal waters and passes out of contact with the old environment. He dies to the past. As he comes up he enters a new

54 W. Heitmüller, J. Weiss, M. Dibelius, and W. Bousset all hold this view. Nock, op.cit., p. 115, says that the phrase was probably a trick of style as Corp. Herm. X.20. It is interesting to note in this connection that the two epistles that relate baptism to a dying and rising with Christ are Romans and Colossians both of which are sent to places where Paul had not visited. This indicates that the idea was known universally.

55 J. Weiss, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 630.

56 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 173.

environment which is the realm of the Spirit.⁵⁷ Knox vividly describes Romans 6 as the Christian revision of the kerygma of Judaism. The death and resurrection of Jesus replace the Exodus from Egypt:

The proselyte through circumcision and the proselyte's bath was enabled to come out of Egypt and pass through the Red Sea into the promised land of Israel. This original salvation of the people was re-enacted in every Gentile who was prepared to come out of Egypt, the natural type of evil in a religion whose literature was dominated by the utterances of the prophets who had counselled submission to Babylon. Paul transfers the argument to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Those who share in it through faith and pass through the waters of baptism are delivered from the old Egyptian bondage to sin and pass instead into a new slavery to righteousness which results in sanctification. Here the union of the Christian with Jesus is stated in terms of an exchange from one slavery to another, on the strength of the Christian conception of the passion and resurrection as the New Passover.⁵⁸

Baptism in the passage before us is the beginning of the new life in which there is union with Christ by virtue of which the believer knows that his old life is dead with Christ and that there is a liberation from the old sphere in the flesh and he enters into the sphere of Christ. The baptized person is called upon to take up an attitude of life agreeable to the inward meaning of baptism. He is crucified with Christ and is joined to a living Lord (Galations 2:20). In Romans 6:5 Paul says that Christians have become organically united by that which is the similitude of his death and by that which is the similitude of his resurrection. The similitude of the death and resurrection

57 It may be inferred from Romans 6:3 that the name of Jesus was pronounced or invoked by the convert and baptizer and this signifies for the believer a "belonging to Christ." Vide Morgan, op.cit., p. 203.

58 W.L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 97.

of Christ is baptism.

The supreme test of the reality of this new life by union with Christ in baptism is its ethical consequences. If baptism is a real dying and rising then a profound revolution has come to one's life, a revolution that shows itself in a new moral character.⁵⁹ In this way Paul appeals to the baptism of the Christians in refutation of an antinomian way of life. If the rite by which they entered the Christian fellowship means anything at all, it is to share with Christ his dying to sin and rising to a new life. The Christians must become detached from that which had before dominated them. This completely rules out moral slackness and sin. Christ becomes the source of a new moral and spiritual energy to those who are in Him.

The ethical implications of dying and rising with Christ indicate that the rite had ethical significance for the baptized and "that the Christian at baptism had been made aware of the moral nature of the new life upon which he was entering."⁶⁰ The inference is justified, as Davies holds, that as in Judaism so in Christianity, baptism was an important occasion for ethical teaching. Davies⁶¹ and Carrington⁶² discover a relationship

59 Dodd, op.cit., p. 119.

60 Davies, op.cit., p. 122.

61 Ibid., pp. 122ff. For further treatment vide infra, pp. 178f.

62 Carrington, op.cit., pp. 47ff.

between certain ethical or hortatory sections of Paul's Epistles⁶³ and other New Testament Epistles⁶⁴ and from this conclude that Paul as other writers in the New Testament was dependent upon baptismal catechetical material and used this material in the role of a teacher.

b. Galations 3:27. The sole direct reference to baptism in Galations is found in 3:27. Paul in counteracting the Judaizing influence among the Galatian churches emphasized, as he did in Romans, that the right relationship that Abraham had with God was on the basis of faith and not by the works of the law (Gal. 3:6ff.). He tells them that before their faith in Christ was realized they had been kept under lock and key under the law (23-24), but now that faith had come the old pedagogue system had terminated for them (25). In verse 27 Paul says, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Here Paul uses the metaphor of clothing oneself with Christ instead of the metaphor of the death and resurrection of Christ found in Romans 6.

What is the meaning of this figure that Paul uses here? Does it have any kinship with the familiar use of the word in the mystery cults? Truly it is not a parallel to the priestly donning of a divine mask nor the dressing up of Lucius in twelve

63 Colossians 3:8-4:12; Ephesians 4:20-6:19; Romans 12:1f.

64 I Peter 1:1-4:11; 4:12-5:14; James 1:1-4:10; Hebrews 12:1f.

robes as the Sun in Apuleius.⁶⁵ It is doubtful whether it refers to a special baptismal robe.⁶⁶ Paul's use of the metaphor may indicate that his Jewish readers would see nothing objectionable in its use or maybe Paul was so accustomed to language of this type that "he uses it without realising the possibility of such an objection from those who are less Hellenistic in their outlook than himself."⁶⁷ However, Knox submits evidence to show that the use of the metaphors of clothing was familiar in the language of Judaism.⁶⁸ Hence, for the meaning of the figure of clothing one does not have to go beyond Judaism and any reference to the mystery cults in this seems to be unnecessary. The comparison of a new life to a fresh garment belongs to the Jewish mind as well as Hellenistic thought.

In the Old Testament there is the idea of clothing oneself with strength, righteousness, glory and salvation.⁶⁹ In Paul's Epistles there are discovered similar figures.⁷⁰ Burton says that these passages in Paul's Epistles show that the idiom

65 Nock, op.cit., p. 106.

66 Knox says that the special baptismal robe cannot be dated with any certainty before the 4th century A.D., W.L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 138 n.1.

67 Ibid., p. 138 n.5.

68 Ibid., p. 138.

69 Proverbs 31:25; Job 8:22; 29:14; 39:19; Psalms 92:1; Isaiah 51:9; 52:1; 59:17; 61:10; Zech. 3:4.

70 Romans 13:2; I Cor. 15:53; 15:54; Ephesians 6:11; 6:14; Colossians 3:12; I Thess. 5:8.

conveyed no suggestion of putting on a mask, but referred to an act in which one entered into actual relations.⁷¹ When used with a personal object ἐνδύνεσθαι means "to take on the character or standing" of the person referred to. It denotes that the wearer becomes in a way identified with what he puts on. When a man is baptized into Christ, he becomes so thoroughly identified with Him that it is no longer he who lives, it is Christ Who lives in him.⁷² It is in baptism that the believer takes on the character of Christ.

What is the relationship between Galatians 3:26 and 3:27? It is argued by some that γάρ in verse 27 implies a casual relation between the two verses and for that reason they hold that baptism is prior to faith. One is not limited to the use of γάρ in a causal connection because it can be explanatory and this seems to be nearer the meaning of this verse. Verse 27 is an explanation of verse 26. "It is," says Burton, "a substantiation (γάρ) of the assertion of v. 26, that they are sons of God, drawn from an interpretation of the significance of their baptism."⁷³ The idea of union with Christ doubtless paved the way for a causal connection with baptism but this faith-mysticism of Paul stands in irreconcilable antithesis to a

71 E.D. Burton, The Epistle to the Galatians, I.C.C., p. 204.

72 Duncan, op.cit., pp. 175f.

73 E.D. Burton, op.cit., p. 204; Vide also Clemen, op.cit., p. 217, and Lambert, op.cit., p. 148.

union vouchsafed through physico-spiritual acts.⁷⁴ Baptism in this context affords an opportunity for the believer to claim now that he is the seed of Abraham and heir of the promise (Gal. 3:29). He also has a claim to Sonship in verse 26. Flemington says that in this teaching of baptism by Paul it becomes a "sacrament of realized eschatology."⁷⁵ This is the inauguration of a New Age. Everything began for the convert when he came up out of the water. He put on Christ and by that act came to share in the privileges of the new life. He was an heir, a son, and free.

A subsidiary idea on baptism in this connection is that it is a symbol of the unity of the fellowship of believers. Paul follows his statement of baptism in verse 27 with "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (verse 28).

c. Colossians 2:12. It seems strange that the Apostle, in view of the controversies he had encountered over the rite of circumcision, would emphasize a meaning of baptism that could be compared to circumcision as he does in Colossians 2:11f. Lightfoot has suggested that it excels circumcision because it is "not made with hands", i.e. not a mutilation but a "putting

74 Angus, Religious Quests in the Graeco-Roman World, p. 202.

75 Op.cit., p. 59.

off of the body of flesh."⁷⁶ It is too obvious to deny that there is a relationship set forth here between circumcision and baptism. However, it is impossible to say that baptism takes the place of circumcision and that circumcision under the Old Age is the same as baptism under the New Age. Circumcision in this passage seems rather to be used in a spiritual sense and it is no more than the usual Pauline view "that union with Christ does away with the necessity for circumcision, and is therefore our initiation into the covenant of Christ."⁷⁷ This passage calls forth faith which was not required for physical circumcision and is also concerned for those who were dead in their sins and have found in Christ the forgiveness of sins.

Paul also in this passage connects baptism with the death and resurrection of Christ. He brings out in substance the same meaning that is found in Romans 6. In chapter 3 he carries forward the idea of being raised with Christ which seems to be an expansion of the thought in 2:12. This is followed by ethical instructions for those who are in Christ (Col. 3:5ff).

2. A Symbol of Unity in the Christian Fellowship.

The chief passages that set forth baptism as a symbol of unity in the Christian fellowship are Galatians 3:28; I Corinthians 12:13; and Ephesians 4:5. Not only was there

⁷⁶ J.B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 183.

⁷⁷ H.H Rowley , "The Origin and Meaning of Baptism", The Baptist Quarterly, Vol.XI,1942-45,p.313.

strife in the church at Corinth due to a party spirit, but also because of undue importance given to those who had "spiritual gifts." Various members of the church prided themselves in their gifts and each felt that his gift excelled that of the other. Paul uses the figure about the "body" and "its members" and connects it with baptism and the Spirit. Paul says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit (I Cor. 12:13). Here baptism is a rite which the Spirit uses for binding men into the unity of the Christian body.⁷⁸ Baptism becomes the bond of union of believers. It is "the 'effective symbol' whereby all Christians are made one in Christ and racial and social distinctions transcended."⁷⁹

In I Corinthians 12:13 the giving of the Spirit is associated with baptism. This is very rare in the teaching of Paul on baptism. It occurs only here and in I Corinthians 6:11. Though the Spirit is imparted at baptism and makes a believer a member of the fellowship, it does not mean that the Spirit is sacramentally mediated by baptism.⁸⁰

78 Lambert, op.cit., p. 162.

79 Flemington, op.cit., p. 57.

80 Morgan, op.cit., p. 206; Clemen, op.cit., p. 219.

The special note of Ephesians is that the Church is the body of Christ. As Christ was incarnate historically so now he is incarnate spiritually in His Church which is His Body. In Christ all humanity has become one. Christ broke down the middle wall of partition that separated Jew and Gentile and reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross (Ephesians 3:11ff.). In chapter 4 Paul⁸¹ mentions some of the marks of unity of the Christian fellowship and among those mentioned is baptism (Ephesians 4:5). "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." The significance given to baptism among these great categories of the Christian creed sets forth the importance of baptism as a bond of union between the members of the Christian society.⁸² Paul appeals to one baptism in which faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ is expressed. Along with the passage in I Corinthians and Ephesians is the expression of unity of Christians in Galatians 3:28 which follows the metaphor of baptism as putting on Christ in verse 27.

3. A Rite of Purification.

There is no express mention of baptism in I Cor. 6:11, but

81 It is assumed by the writer that Paul wrote Ephesians.

82 Lambert, op.cit., p. 177.

it is generally held that baptism is referred to by the analogy of the use of ἀπολούομαι in Acts 22:16 with βαπτίζω, and the use of the name Jesus in connection with the washing. After giving a dreadful list of transgressors of God's law, Paul states, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God." Here baptism is looked upon as a psychological moment to which all of them can return. He calls to the attention of his readers that at one time they had practised the flagrant immoralities which he had enumerated, but now at baptism they separated themselves from the sinful world in which they had formerly lived, and had joined themselves to the fellowship of those in Christ. They were now washed with the water of baptism. The Corinthian Christians at baptism had separated themselves from the fellowship of unholy men in the principles that guided their practical Christian living and they were not to forget the gulf that divides the unrighteous from those who are dedicated to Christ. Baptism in this verse is linked with the name, justification, sanctification, and the Spirit. However, it is to be noted, as Barth points out, that in verse 11 it does not say that we are washed, sanctified and justified in baptism, but "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."⁸³

It is held by some that in Ephesians 5:25-27 the Apostle

83 Karl Barth, The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism, p.21.

has in mind baptism and the meaning is that of cleansing.⁸⁴ Paul speaks of a marriage in this passage and compares the husband to Christ and the bride to the Church. Does Paul see in this an analogy between the baptismal rite and the customary lustration of the bride before marriage? Kennedy holds that it is an obvious reference to such.⁸⁵ But in this passage, if it is held that it refers to baptism, the rite which is ordinarily administered to the individual for purification becomes a means whereby the Church is purified. Pfleiderer contends that baptism in verse 26 is designated as the means of purification by which the consecration of the community as the pure bride of Christ, made possible by His death, is accomplished.⁸⁶ He holds that the purifying effect of baptism depends on the λουτρὸν τοῦ ὕδατος and the ῥήμα .⁸⁷ Flemington thinks that ἐν ῥήματι is a reference to a word that was pronounced in the solemn moment of baptism and may denote the baptismal formula "in the name of Jesus" or the profession of faith that "Jesus is Lord" from Romans 10:9.⁸⁸ This is quite possible, though the ἐν ῥήματι may mean that Paul sees that the word of the

84 Marsh, op.cit., p. 149; Flemington, op.cit., p. 65; et al.

85 Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, pp. 251f.

86 Pfleiderer, Paulinism, Vol. II, pp. 185f.

87 Ibid., p. 185.

88 Op.cit., p. 65.

Gospel is the true power of cleansing and baptism is the symbol of that living word.

4. I Corinthians 15:29.

Since this teaching of baptism by the Apostle does not come under any of the headings listed above, it is advisable to treat it separately. Numerous attempts have been made to interpret this verse of Scripture and countless interpretations, many of which are fantastic and valueless, have been the result. Immediately when the verse is read, certain questions spring from the mind of the reader. Who are the dead mentioned here? Is Paul speaking of a church practice or a pagan practice? If he is speaking of a Christian or pagan custom, does he approve of it?

The usual interpretation is that there is discovered here an example of vicarious baptism of Christians on behalf of their dead relatives or friends who had been in sympathy with Christianity but died without being baptized. However, the earliest known reference to such a practice comes from the second century in the writings of Tertullian who ascribes it to the Marcionites.⁸⁹ It is very likely that the heretics discovered their own view for such a practice in the verse under discussion and it is not to be regarded as independent testimony to the existence of the custom among primitive Christians.

⁸⁹ De Resurrectione Carnis, 48; Adversus Marcion. V.10.

Weinel contends that the dead referred to are those who died before conversion.⁹⁰ McGiffert⁹¹ and Moffatt⁹² hold that they are believers who died before receiving baptism. It is further held that the dead are those dead in sins, that instead of "in behalf of" the dead it is "over" the dead and the Christians baptized among the graves over the dead as a symbolism of the resurrection, and that the dead are those about to die.

It is assumed by some that this is a pagan practice.⁹³ Wernle takes Paul to task for becoming infected by the heathen superstition of his Corinthian converts.⁹⁴ Wernle in his statement assumes that the heathen held to a superstition of baptizing for the dead. Schweitzer has examined the evidence⁹⁵ usually given for such and concludes that "baptism for the dead has not, so far at least, proved susceptible of explanation from heathen sources, but must be regarded as a peculiarity of Christianity."⁹⁶ So Schweitzer contends that it must have been a Christian custom which disappeared when Paul's eschatological

90 Op.cit., p. 120.

91 Op.cit., p. 272.

92 I Corinthians, M.N.T.C., loc.cit.

93 Pfleiderer, Primitive Christianity, p. 417; P. Wernle, Beginnings of Christianity, Vol.I, p. 214; R. Reitzenstein, op.cit., p. 84; Anrich, op.cit., pp. 119f.

94 Op.cit., Vol.I, p. 214.

95 Plato's Republic II. 364-5; the Taurobolia; and the baptism of the dead attested by a papyrus by Reitzenstein.

96 Schweitzer, Paul and His Interpreters, p. 212.

ideas were subordinated.⁹⁷ However, Schweitzer ignores the fact that customs prevail long after the reason for them is past.⁹⁸

If this custom is either a pagan or a Christian one, does Paul approve? Stevens observes that Paul gives no sanction to the custom nor does he object.⁹⁹ Kennedy¹⁰⁰ and Dobschutz¹⁰¹, while they hold that it is quite probable that the origin of the custom is in the mystery-cults, do not believe that Paul approved of the practice for "it is wholly illegitimate to suppose that because Paul pronounces no condemnation on a custom to which he refers, he must have given it his approval."¹⁰² Dobschutz suggests that the superstition belonged to the circle of the "skeptical" at Corinth since "lack of faith and superstition came of the same lineage."¹⁰³ However, if it is a pagan or a Christian practice and perhaps a custom that Paul does not sanction, he may have used the practice as an argument of the resurrection since there arose a question over it. He could show them how absurd their custom was if they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Therefore, it may be

97 Schweitzer, Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, pp. 283ff.

98 Marsh, op.cit., p. 148.

99 G.B. Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament, p. 461 n.1.

100 St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, p. 253.

101 Op.cit., p. 20.

102 Kennedy, op.cit., p. 253.

103 Op.cit., p. 37

that he does not condemn the practice because he can use it to confirm his argument. Even if it is a pagan custom, he finds in it a witness to the resurrection in the heathen conscience.

If the number of interpretations of this verse are not already too numerous, the writer would like to propose another. The reason that Paul gives his lengthy discourse on the resurrection of the dead in chapter 15 is that there was some question in the minds of certain Corinthian Christians as to whether there was a resurrection at all. Perhaps there was a relapse to the Greek position of immortality of the soul because they could not quite conceive of the soul possessing a body after death. At any rate when he comes to verse 29, he uses this as another argument for the resurrection of the dead. Baptism as has already been noted was viewed by Paul as connected with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3ff and Col. 2:12). It goes without saying that νεκρῶν in verse 29 means "dead bodies." It is also very obvious from many examples in the New Testament that the article is sometimes used for the possessive pronoun. For example in Mark 3:1 where Jesus heals the withered hand of the man, the Evangelist says καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ ἄνθρωπος ἐξηραμμένην ἔχων τὴν χεῖρα. The τήν means "his" hand though the article is used. There is no other person's hand to which it could refer. The same is true of τῶν and αὐτῶν in verse 29 of 1 Cor. 15. The reference is to their own dead bodies and not those of friends or relatives who have departed this life. Hence, the translation would run like this: "Else

what shall they do, the ones being baptized in behalf of their own dead bodies? If truly the dead ones are not being raised, why then are they being baptized in behalf of them (their own dead bodies)?" What Paul has in mind here is that there is no need for the Corinthian Christians to continue the rite of baptism if they do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, because in baptism death and resurrection of Christ and the believer is vividly portrayed. So why do they continue to portray in baptism that which they do not believe?

There are three passages in Paul's Epistles where he uses the verb $\sigmaφραγίζομαι$.¹⁰⁴ Though there is no reference in his Epistles to a seal in connection with baptism, it is not improbable that Paul here is referring to baptism under this figure.¹⁰⁵ In the second century $\sigmaφραγίς$ came to be a common term for Christian baptism and by this time it is evident that it is a synonym for baptism.¹⁰⁶ Hatch¹⁰⁷ and Harnack¹⁰⁸ believe that $\sigmaφραγίς$ is terminology of the pagan mysteries, but Anrich¹⁰⁹

104 Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; II Corinthians 1:21-22.

105 W.L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 186 n.2; H. Lietzmann, I and II Korinther, H.Z.N.T., p. 103.

106 II Clement 7:6; 8:6; Hermas, Similitudes, IX, xvi, 3-5.

107 Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church, p. 295.

108 History of Dogma, Vol. I, p. 208.

109 Op.cit., pp. 120ff.

says that the use of the term dates from a time previous to the possible influence of pagan mysteries on Christianity and is discovered in the New Testament. In all probability the second century writers observed the passages in Paul where $\sigma\phi\rho\alpha\gamma\iota\zeta\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ is used and saw a synonym for baptism.

Though Paul's Epistles set forth baptism as a doctrine and there are no references to a teaching about the practice, yet in his doctrine of baptism one finds evidence about the practice. In Romans 6:3ff. there is the implication that the baptism is by immersion. In I Cor. 1:13-17 it appears that Paul left the rite of baptism to helpers such as Silas and Timothy and he did not administer the rite as a rule. Some find evidence for infant baptism in I Cor. 7:14 and Colossians 2:11f., but it is simply surmised.¹¹⁰

110 Vide Appendix D for a discussion of infant baptism.

Chapter III

BAPTISM IN THE NON-PAULINE EPISTLES

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Having examined the teaching of Christian baptism in the Pauline Epistles it is now fitting to turn to the non-Pauline works that bear upon the subject. It will not be necessary to consider those epistles that do not mention baptism or related terms but to examine only those passages where baptism is specifically mentioned or where there is supposedly a reference to it. Such a study will include I Peter 3:21, Hebrews 6:2; 10:22, Titus 3:5, and I John 5:5-8.

1. I Peter 3:21.

The most significant passage in the non-Pauline Epistles that refers to Christian baptism is that which is contained in I Peter. This is a very striking but difficult teaching on baptism. Possibly the difficulty is enhanced by the analogy which is employed. It has been argued that the author must have been hard pressed for a comparison through which he could express himself when he sets forth baptism as the Christian counterpart of the water of the Deluge. However, it has also been maintained that Paul does equal violence in using the story of the Israelites being baptized in the Red Sea into Moses as a prototype of Christian baptism (I Cor. 10:1-2). McNeile suggests that the analogy of baptism and the Flood is a reflection

of the influence of Paul.¹ If there is such an obvious reflection of Pauline influence, the question might be asked why did he not use the analogy of the crossing of the Red Sea instead of the Deluge?

The author of the epistle² had been encouraging his readers to face suffering since Christ had suffered for them as an example. By his use of θανάτω θεὸς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιή θεὸς δὲ πνεύματι in verse 18b there may have been the suggestion in this of a reference to the resurrection that prompted him to use baptism. However, it is more likely that the story of Noah suggested a comparison of the salvation of Noah and his household in the ark from the waters of the Flood to the saving power of Christian baptism. There remains also the possibility that this was a favourite analogy of the primitive Church. Selwyn places the credal hymn in I Timothy 3:16 beside I Peter 3:18-22 and shows a relationship which is too obvious to overlook.³ It may be that I Peter 3:18-22 is a baptismal hymn and I Timothy is dependent upon it.

Peter says that Noah and his household διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος "were saved through water." The local use of δι' ὕδατος is preferred to the instrumental use because it is evident that

1 A.H. McNeile, New Testament Teaching in the Light of St. Paul's, p. 150.

2 The writer assumes that Peter the Apostle is the author.

3 E.G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter, p. 325.

Noah and his household were not saved by means of water but by the ark which passed through the waters.⁴ There has been much discussion on the antecedent of the relative pronoun $\acute{\omicron}'$ in verse 21 and this has led some to hold to the reading $\acute{\omega}$ instead of $\acute{\omicron}'$. $\acute{\omega}$ was proposed by Erasmus and was favoured by Hort who classifies $\acute{\omicron}'$ as a "primitive error." External evidence is definitely for $\acute{\omicron}'$ instead of $\acute{\omega}$ because only the inferior cursives and the first corrector of λ' have $\acute{\omega}$. Hort in accepting $\acute{\omega}$ violates the accepted canons of textual criticism. It is worthy of notice that he includes $\acute{\omicron}'$ in his text. Beare holds to $\acute{\omega}$ in favour of Hort and claims that the antecedent of $\acute{\omega}$ is not $\acute{\upsilon}\delta\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ but the whole phrase $\delta\iota\epsilon\sigma\acute{\omega}\theta\eta\sigma\alpha\tau\ \delta\iota'\ \acute{\upsilon}\delta\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$.⁵ It is thereby not water as such but the salvation of Noah and his family through water which is the type. It is far better to accept $\acute{\omicron}'$ as the true reading and see it as a reference to $\acute{\upsilon}\delta\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ just mentioned. Selwyn takes $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota\tau\omicron\upsilon\pi\omicron\nu$ as in apposition with $\acute{\upsilon}\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ and suggests the following translation which is worthy of acceptance: "And water now saves you too, who are the antitype of Noah and his company, namely the water of baptism."⁶

The author of the epistle puts forward his view of that which is distinctive of Christian baptism in both a negative and

4 F.W. Beare, The First Epistle of Peter, p. 147.

5 Ibid., p. 148.

6 Op.cit., p. 203.

positive manner by two appositional phrases. Negatively stated baptism is οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." There seems to be very little difficulty in understanding the negative statement, however, the positive meaning is not quite so clear. The removal of dirt or ceremonial uncleanness is not the meaning of Christian baptism. Peter rejects "a positively erroneous baptismal theory and practice, namely a ritual purifying with a mere physical or material blamelessness as the aim."⁷ The remark is doubtless not the same as saying "not only the putting away of the filth of the flesh." Οὐ as a correlative of ἀλλὰ is not equivalent to οὐ μόνον. If the author had meant "not only" he would have used οὐ μόνον and not simply οὐ. The statement is a polemic against a faulty theory of the rite.⁸ Possibly the author is contrasting the spiritually effective Christian baptism with Judaistic ceremonial cleansings or perhaps a pagan idea of the observance of the rite.

Positively stated baptism is συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς Θεόν "an answer of a good conscience toward God." Reicke, in his masterful exegetical treatment of I Peter 3:19 and its context, makes a study of verses 21b-22 and seeks to overcome the conventional difficulty involved in the interpretation of this

7 Bo Reicke, The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism, p.188.

8 Ibid., p. 186.

positive phrase by a study of the words contained in it.⁹ The meaning that he discovers for $\sigmaυνειδήσεως$ is that of a "good or loyal attitude of mind" or "good-will." It is the willingness to fulfil loyally the whole of God's will. Concerning $\epsilonπερώτημα$ which has been translated as "prayer,"¹⁰ "pledge,"¹¹ "answer," "question,"¹² "resolution," and "declaration" Reicke suggests that the author "is thinking of a special act in the ritual of Baptism, perhaps a statement of belief or something similar, or else he terms Baptism an agreement or an undertaking only in a general meaning."¹³ He accepts the latter because it fits in more with I Peter 3:21. Baptism is defined as an undertaking with an ethical meaning. Baptism does not save unconditionally but only on certain conditions. Baptism "implies an acceptance of the divine demand for a positive habit of mind in loyalty to God and man."¹⁴ In other words, faith, though it

9 Op.cit., pp. 173-207.

10 H. Windisch, Taufe und Sünde im Altesten Christentum bis auf Origenes, pp. 231-32; C. Clemen, op.cit., p. 225 n. 3. Windisch claims that $\epsilonπερώτημα$ is a reference to part of the ritual followed in the administration of baptism and was a prayer to God by the convert (pp. 231f.).

11 Beare, op.cit., p. 149.

12 J.W.P. Wand, The General Epistles of St. Peter and Jude, p.102. Wand says that $\epsilonπερώτημα$ is a question put to a catechumen.

13 Op.cit., p. 185.

14 Ibid., p. 186.

is not specifically mentioned in this connection, is that which makes it efficacious.¹⁵ In I Peter 1:5 faith is shown as the principle of salvation and in verse 9 of the same chapter salvation is described as the τέλος "the outcome" or "issue" of faith.

It has been lately emphasized in a study by Carrington that in the early Church, as in Judaism, baptism was an important occasion for ethical teaching.¹⁶ It has already been noted in the study of baptism in Paul's Epistles that there are ethical sections in his Epistles which are similar to other New Testament Epistles. It has been favourably received that in I Peter 1:3-4:11 is preserved material that was used at the baptism of converts. Streeter refers to Gunkel who mentions Perdelwitz on this conjecture:

H. Gunkel in his introduction to the Epistle mentions a recent conjecture of Perdelwitz ... that this section of the Epistle (i.e. 1:3-4:11) was originally an address given by the bishop to a group of newly baptized persons - presumably at some great festival In the early Church, candidates for baptism were normally adults converted from heathenism, and would include persons of very different classes - slaves, married women, fathers of families (2:18-3:7). Read as an address given on such an occasion the exhortations are extraordinarily appropriate - an inspiring description of the new life into which they have been reborn, followed by encouragement to face alike the responsibilities involved and the hostility of the outside world.¹⁷

15 Selwyn, op.cit., pp.204f.

16 Carrington, The Primitive Christian Catechism.

17 B.H. Streeter, The Primitive Church, pp. 122f.

The assumption is that because there is a similarity in the material in I Peter 1:3-4:11 to hortatory sections of other Epistles then the authors must have drawn on a common storehouse of material.¹⁸

It is very clear that there is a close connection between σωζει and δι' ἀναστάσεως . It is only natural to connect δι' ἀναστάσεως with νῦν σωζει and not with συνειδήσεως . This is correct because the two appositions to βέπτισμα are parenthetical statements. By connecting νῦν σωζει with δι' ἀναστάσεως the author is here explaining what it is that gives baptism its saving power. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So for Peter as well as Paul the saving power of baptism lies in the fact that it is applied to the resurrection of Jesus.¹⁹ There is a close relationship between I Peter 3:21 and Colossians 2:10-12. In Colossians 2:10 there is an allusion to all principalities and powers being in subjection to Christ in whom all the πλήρωμα of Deity dwelt bodily. In some of the heretical teachings at Colosse there was emphasis on the fact that Christ was not in control of the whole universe. There were certain areas where Christ did not have power. Paul contends that there is no area over which Christ does not have control because by Him all things were created (1:16f.). In

18 Carrington, op.cit., pp.23f.

19 Cf. Romans 6:3ff and Colossians 2:11f.

I Peter 3:19,22 there is also the contention that Christ is over all angelic powers.

In Colossians 2:11f and I Peter 3:21 there is a contrast between the outward and the inward. In Colossians there is a contrast between spiritual circumcision and physical circumcision, while in I Peter it is contrast between an external removal of dirt from the body in baptism and the pledging of human faith to do God's will. Finally, these passages are related by an allusion to the power of faith in Christ's resurrection.

2. Hebrews 6:2 and 10:19-22.

In Hebrews 6:2 there is a direct reference to baptism and in Hebrews 10:22 the verb λούομαι is used which is not strictly speaking a baptism, but it is generally held that the author has baptism in mind.²⁰ In chapter 6 the author of Hebrews warns his readers not to be content with first principles of Christian teaching but to press on unto completion. He lists six of the elementary teachings contained in the Christian Faith and in the list is included "teaching of baptisms." It is to be noticed that the word used here is not the regular word employed to signify Christian baptism. The word that is found here is βαπτισμός not βάπτισμα. It is also to be pointed out that the plural is used here instead of the regular singular. Does

²⁰ It is Jewish lustrations to which the author refers in Hebrews 9:10 and not Christian baptism. Cf. Mark 7:4.

the author include the ceremonial washings of the Jews? Or does he have in mind John's rite or some ceremonial washings that had been added to the Christian community? It is impossible to say with any degree of assurance what the plural means, but in all probability it refers to Jewish lustrations and Christian baptism.

In this list of elementary subjects of Christian instruction baptism is associated with repentance, faith, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. It is assumed by some that φωτισθεύτας in 6:4 is a synonym for "baptized." It is not likely that there is any connection in the mind of the author. In the second century φωτισμός was a synonym for such.²¹ There is no evidence that it was a technical term for Christian baptism at such an early date, yet its use indicates how it was acquired in the second century.²²

From Hebrews 6:4ff. and 10:26ff. it appears that the author of the Epistle considers post-baptismal sins as unforgivable.²³ Later it was demonstrated by practical experience that Christians did not abstain from sin after baptism. This problem was dealt with by the Gnostic sects by re-baptism. In orthodox circles Hermas takes up the question and introduces the "angel of

21 Justin Martyr, Apologia 1:61; Clement of Alexandria, Paedagogus I, 6.

22 Marsh, op.cit., p. 152.

23 K. Lake, An Introduction to the New Testament, p. 160.

Penance."²⁴ Hermas protests against those who postpone baptism because of a danger of relapse to sin after baptism. In Visions III. 7, he compares those who stay away from baptism because of a relapse to sin after baptism to the stones he saw in Visions III. 2 *πίπτοντας ἔγγυς ὕδατων καὶ μὴ δυνάμενους κυλισθῆναι καὶ ἐλθεῖν εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ.*

The second reference to baptism in Hebrews is 10:22. After stating that Jesus, the High Priest, by His death had opened up a new and living way of approach to God, the author continues with an exhortation, "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water" (verse 22).

It is not clear what the real significance of the rite is in this verse. He mentions two conditions for drawing near to God which are: "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" and a "body washed with pure water." It is the latter condition that suggests baptism. The allusion here is to the consecration of priests by the sprinkled blood²⁵ and lustrations²⁶ which preceded the sacrifice. Do the two conditions suggest an analogy of Old Testament types and mean that Christ's sacrifice accepted by faith dedicates His people as priests to God while baptism is a rite of initiation. Possibly the author is not following Old Testament

24 Shepherd of Hermas, Mandates IV.3; Visions III.7.

25 Exodus 29:21; Leviticus 8:30.

26 Exodus 30:20; 40:30-32; and Leviticus 16:24.

types here, because he would have made some sort of explanation as he so often does in the Epistle.

There seems to be a conflict in this passage with the position of Peter. In I Peter 3:21 it is shown very definitely that water of baptism is not for cleansing the body while it seems to be assumed here without reservation.²⁷ Flemington seeks to evade this conflict with the passage in I Peter by saying, "The outward washing of the body typifies the inward cleansing of the soul, a cleansing made possible because of the sacrificial death of Christ."²⁸ This meaning that Flemington gives is not clearly seen in the passage. The context of the passage sets baptism in relation to the death of Christ, faith, and a new moral life.

3. Titus 3:5.

The sole reference to Christian baptism in the Pastorals is found in Titus 3:5. The context of this passage is part of a section where the author stresses the highest type of Christian conduct before the pagan world. In 3:3 he reminds his readers that they were formerly slaves to sin. This reminds one of I Cor. 6:9-10 where Paul reminds his readers of their former way of life but emphasizes the fact that they had been washed. In all probability the author has this statement of Paul in mind.

27 Bo Reicke, op.cit., p. 187.

28 Flemington, op.cit., p. 98.

He goes on to remind them that they were not saved by any works of man to achieve a right relationship with God. This change in their character had its beginning in God. God manifested His *Χρηστότης* and *φιλανθρωπία* and it was according to His mercy that they were saved *διὰ λουτροῦ παλινγενεσίας* "through a washing of regeneration" and *ἡ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου* "a renewing of the Holy Spirit." Though the word used here is not the usual word for baptism, it is generally held that this is a reference to baptism.

Scott maintains that this attitude towards baptism is quite different from the teaching of the Apostle Paul because there is absent the idea of dying and rising with Christ, no insistence on faith but the introduction of a mysterious rite through which the Spirit works for our renewal, no idea of Paul's formula "in Christ," and the rite appears to be nothing more than a purifying rite.²⁹ It is quite true that the author does not connect baptism with the death and resurrection of Jesus, but neither does Paul in all his references to baptism in his Epistles. Concerning the lack of emphasis of faith, it is to be noted that in Titus 3:8 there is the use of the perfect participle of the verb *πιστεύω* which is followed by *θεός* in the dative case. The meaning is "those who have set their faith in God." Scott holds in his comments on Ephesians that "It may be confidently

29 E.F. Scott, The Pastoral Epistles, M.N.T.C., pp. 176-177.

said that there is nothing in Ephesians which Paul might not have written."³⁰ However, in Ephesians 5:26 there is definitely the idea of a purifying rite set forth, so the idea of a purifying rite in Titus would not be un-Pauline. Is one justified in saying that according to the attitude towards baptism in Titus 3:5 Christianity is on its way towards a magical view of the rite? Marsh claims that in "λουτρόν παλιγγενεσίας we have language that brings us into touch with that realm of Hellenistic thought which later exercised considerable influence over Christian teaching."³¹ If one places emphasis on the magical side of the author's view of baptism, he completely ignores the stress on the divine love poured out to mankind. Flemington so aptly states it in this manner:

If the essence of magic lies in the belief that by the use of material media a man can exert compulsion on the deity to fulfil his desires, then magical ideas are surely absent from this passage. The "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" is no merely human device: it is rather the instrument of the divine goodness, the means whereby the free unmerited love of God is imparted to men and makes them "heirs to the hope of life eternal."³²

The word παλιγγενεσία was used by the Stoics for the periodical ἀποκατάστασις of the world order which in their theory supervened upon the periodical ἐκπύρωσις or "destruction

30 E.F. Scott, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians, M.N.T.C., p. 121.

31 Marsh, op.cit., p. 150.

32 Flemington, op.cit., p. 104.

by fire." In Matthew 19:28 $\pi\alpha\lambda\iota\gamma\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is used of the Messianic renewal which was to be the characteristic of the New Age of Israel. The Evangelist used this word as the nearest Greek equivalent of the Hebrew idea of renewal of creation.³³ Thornton suggests that $\pi\alpha\lambda\iota\gamma\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ in Titus 3:5 means the "rebirth" of the Messianic community which was ushered in on the day of Pentecost:

The new creation of the messianic community as a whole had its historical inauguration in the event of Pentecost. Through baptism the individual is placed within that event. He is here taken into the eschatological crisis of re-birth, whereby the people of God were once for all renewed. The descent of the Spirit at Pentecost was the event whereby the new life of the risen Christ was precipitated into his community. By sharing the outpoured Spirit they were re-born in Christ. They partook of the new life which is his life; but also that fact constituted a renewal of their nature effected by the Holy Spirit.³⁴

This meaning given by Thornton is not improbable because in Acts 3:21 Peter in his speech to the people from Solomon's porch uses the Stoical term $\alpha\nu\omicron\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ which is related to $\pi\alpha\lambda\iota\gamma\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$. Peter defines this "restoration of all things" as being "these days" in verse 24. So it is highly probable that the term $\pi\alpha\lambda\iota\gamma\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ was in the kerygma of the primitive Church and is possibly related to Paul's idea of "new creation" and the Fourth Gospel writer's view of "birth from above."

33 A.E.J. Rawlinson, The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ, p. 144.

34 Op.cit., pp. 190f.

4. I John 5:6-8.

Baptism in the Fourth Gospel has already been treated in connection with the relation of Jesus to John's rite.³⁵ It is now fitting to turn to the Johannine Epistles for a consideration of the teaching and practice of baptism. In these Epistles there is only one reference to baptism. However, even here the word "baptism" does not occur but water which is generally held to be a reference to Christian baptism. The passage under consideration is I John 5:6-8.

In verse 5 the author had stated that the one conquering the world was the one who believed that "Jesus is the Son of God." In verse 6 he continues with this line of thought and defines Jesus Christ as the one who came δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος "through water and blood." The aorist participle ἐλθὼν is used in this verse to indicate a historical coming of Jesus, so there seems to be a reference to the actual events of Jesus' life on earth.

What do the water and the blood mean? Is the clue to the interpretation to be found in John 19:34f where an observer bears witness to the fact that blood and water issued from the pierced side of Jesus?³⁶ In John 19:35 the Evangelist states that the one who saw the blood and water issue from Jesus' side

35 Supra, pp. 94ff. It is assumed by the writer that the author of the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles is the same.

36 In I John 5:6 the order is "water and blood" whereas in John 19:34 the order is reversed.

has borne witness and his witness is true. In both passages (John 19:34f. and I John 5:6f.) the idea of witness is introduced. However, in the case of the Fourth Gospel it is a "witness of an observer to a fact, and not the witness of the water and the blood"³⁷ as is found in I John 5:6f. Is there a clue discovered in the symbolism of the Fourth Gospel in drinking the blood of Jesus in John 6:52f. and the bestowal of living water in John 4:14? There is no help from this in interpreting the appearance of Jesus in history by water and blood that bear witness to the reality of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

The author goes on to say "not by water only, but by water and the blood." This obviously indicates that some believed that Jesus came by water but not by blood. It is in this statement that a clue is discovered that will aid in the interpretation of the passage. It is hard to classify the heresy against which the author writes, but it is not incredible to propose that it was Gnosticism creeping into the Christian fellowship. It was held by Cerinthus³⁸ that Jesus was a man until His baptism and then the divine Christ descended upon Him. The Christ remained with Him until the crucifixion and then departed because it was impossible for the divine to suffer. It may be that the author is here refuting such a view as that proposed by Cerinthus.

37 C.H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles, M.N.T.C., p. 129.

38 Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, I, xxvi. 1.

If that is true, then the meaning of water and blood is very obvious. The reference to water is the baptism of Jesus and the blood refers to the crucifixion. Both are essential in the mind of the author because he says "not only by water (which must have been taken for granted), but by water and the blood." Both of these affirm that Jesus Christ is the Son of God Incarnate.

How do the water and blood bear witness? Dodd suggests that the mention of Spirit aids in the interpretation.³⁹ The Spirit was "both a factor in the historical life of Jesus, and a continuing factor in the experience of the Church."⁴⁰ In like manner the baptism and the crucifixion are verified facts in history and testify to the reality of the Incarnation of the Son of God. They are also continuing witnesses in the Church in baptism and the Lord's Supper. Dodd points out that their value as witnesses lies in their "being concrete, overt, 'objective' actions, directly recalling (or 're-presenting') historical facts of the Gospel, while at the same time they are the vehicles of a supra-historical life in the Church."⁴¹

39 Op.cit., p. 130.

40 Ibid., p. 130.

41 Ibid., p. 131.

C O N C L U S I O N

CONCLUSION

It was discovered that Christian baptism had its origin in dominical authority. Whether this dominical authority was dependent upon the command of Jesus in Matthew 28:19 is not essential because even apart from any word from Jesus the validity of the rite is far from being annulled and it is only natural that the disciples of Jesus would have revived it since some of His disciples had previously been the disciples of John and had undergone John's rite. Christian baptism could still have its origin on dominical authority on the basis of the life and ministry of Jesus. However, after a textual, historical, and literary critical analysis of the command in Matthew 28:19, there was found nothing that would keep one from seriously considering the passage genuine.

Christian baptism has as its prototype John's baptism. Jesus Himself was baptized by John and according to the Fourth Gospel the rite was continued for a while by Jesus when His ministry paralleled that of John in Judaea. When the antecedents of John's baptism were sought, it was discovered that they were found in Judaism and not in non-Jewish sources such as the lustral rites of the mystery cults and the Mandaeans. The prototypes in Israel which viewed together seem to account for John's rite are the Levitical lustrations, the prophetic teachings on lustrations, and proselyte baptism. Probably

proselyte baptism was more closely related to his baptism than the other rites, though he was dependent upon the prophets for the ethical significance of the rite. It was pointed out that though there were similarities that were obvious between John's baptism and the proselyte bath yet there were some differences. The proselyte bath was for the Gentiles, but John's baptism was for all. John's baptism was administered in public while proselyte baptism was administered privately before two or three witnesses. John's rite was to signify a change of life while the proselyte bath signified a change of creed. It is further noticed that John's baptism was an eschatological rite. A new age was about to dawn. While the proselyte was baptized to be admitted into an existing society, the baptism of John aimed to prepare them for a new society.

1. Christian Baptism in Acts.

Baptism occupied an important place in the ministry of the early Church. At first glance it appears that there are three views set forth on the practice of baptism in the early Church. One view is that baptism with the Holy Spirit is given to the Christians instead of the baptism of John which is characterized by water (Acts 1:5 and 11:15-16). A second view is suggested by the scene at Ephesus where baptism in water resulted in possession of the Spirit provided it was "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:1-7). The third view is the case where

baptism in water even "in the name of the Lord Jesus" does not confer the Holy Spirit, but this comes only when the Apostles lay their hands on the believers (Acts 8:8-19). It was discovered that it was not impossible to regard the second and third view as one. In each case the disciples are baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus" and the imposition of hands is the antecedent condition for reception of the Holy Spirit. The real difficulty comes in trying to reconcile the first view with the second and third. It was noticed that the disciples viewed Spirit baptism as a supplement of water baptism, since most of them possibly were recipients of John's baptism. It was only natural that they should associate Spirit baptism with water baptism, which for them had preceded their reception of the Spirit.

It was further noticed in Acts that baptism was looked upon as an initiatory rite to the Christian community. The emphasis in Acts is upon practice and not upon the doctrine of baptism. The formula "in the name of Jesus Christ" or "in the name of the Lord Jesus" is the new factor in the baptismal rite that differentiates Christian baptism from John's baptism. To be baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus" means to be completely possessed by Christ. It was also noticed that the two preliminary conditions to baptism in the early Church were faith and repentance. Finally, there is the reception of the Holy Spirit connected with Christian baptism.

2. Christian Baptism in Paul's Epistles.

The Apostle Paul gives hardly any information on the practice of Christian baptism and even his treatment of the doctrine of baptism is not systematic but is for the most part used to counteract immoral practices of Christians in reminding them of the ethical significance of baptism. It was discovered that Paul did not regard baptism as a magical rite nor as a hollow symbol. The centrality of faith in the teaching of Paul renders any magic effect untenable and his emphasis of a mystical union with Christ rules out baptism treated as a hollow symbol.

The chief significance of Christian baptism for the Apostle Paul is that it is a mystical union with Christ as shown from Romans 6:3ff.; Galatians 3:27; and Colossians 2:11f. Baptism is associated with the death and resurrection of Jesus and by virtue of that fact carries with it great ethical significance. Baptism is looked upon as the time when one clothes himself with Christ. It was further discovered that Paul considers baptism as a symbol of unity in the Christian fellowship (I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; and Ephesians 4:5), and as a rite of purification (I Corinthians 6:11 and Ephesians 5:26).

It is quite possible that Paul's teaching of baptism was not peculiar to himself but was the teaching of the primitive Church because of the question in Romans 6:3 "Know ye not?" which indicates that his statement of baptism which follows was in the Church tradition. But whether this view of baptism prevailed

in the primitive Church or not, it is reasonable to hold that Paul brought out the implications of baptism more than his contemporaries.

3. Christian Baptism in the Non-Pauline Epistles.

The most significant passage on baptism in the non-Pauline Epistles is that found in I Peter 3:21. Here baptism is an analogy of the water of the Deluge. Negatively stated baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." Positively stated baptism is a pledge of determination to be loyal to God's commandments. Baptism receives its saving power from the resurrection of Jesus. From the study by Carrington and others it is possible to hold that the view set forward here was in the primitive tradition. It is possible that I Peter 1:3-4:11 is baptismal catechetical material.

It was discovered that in Hebrews post-baptismal sins are looked upon by the author as irremediable. In Hebrews 6:2f. baptism is listed among the rudimentary elements of Christianity. There seems to be a conflict in views between I Peter 3:21 and Hebrews 10:22. In I Peter 3:21 it is shown very definitely that water of baptism is not for cleansing the body while in Hebrews 10:22 it seems to be assumed without reservation.

In Titus 3:5 it was noticed after examining the context of the passage that the "washing of regeneration" was not unrelated to Paul's view of baptism. If one places emphasis on the magical side of the author's view of baptism, he completely

ignores the stress on the divine love poured out to mankind. It is reasonable to hold that the word $\pi\alpha\lambda\iota\gamma\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ means the "re-birth" of the Messianic community which was ushered in on the day of Pentecost and it is highly probable that the term $\pi\alpha\lambda\iota\gamma\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ was in the kerygma of the primitive Church and is possibly related to Paul's idea of "new creation" and the Fourth Gospel writer's view of "birth from above."

The reference to water and blood in I John 5:6-8 more than likely refers to the baptism and crucifixion of Jesus as evidence of His Incarnation to counteract the teaching of Gnostics that the Christ came to Jesus at baptism but left Him at the crucifixion because it was impossible for the divine to suffer. Not only are water and blood historical witnesses to the Incarnation of the Son of God, but also continuing witnesses in the Church in baptism and the Lord's Supper.

A P P E N D I X

APPENDIX A

EISLER'S THEORY

In the Slavonic Version of the 'Jewish War' there are seven or eight fragments that refer to John the Baptist, Jesus, and the early Christians. These Slavonic fragments have taken on a new importance due to the book by Robert Eisler.¹ Eisler contends that Josephus wrote a description of Jesus and John the Baptist in an original Semitic rough-draft of the 'Jewish War' and later this draft was translated into Greek which was published in 71 A.D. The standard Greek version appeared in the reign of Domitian (81-96 A.D.) after the Antiquities. Later this earlier Greek draft was translated from a Byzantine copy now lost into the old 'Slavonic' by some Russian priest. Eisler, by correcting and excising portions of the text, uses it for his own satisfaction.

The most important sentences in the fragments are those that deal with John the Baptist:

Now at that time there walked among the Jews a man in wondrous garb ... But in countenance he was like a savage. This man came to the Jews and allured them to freedom, saying, 'God hath sent me to show you the way of the Law, by which ye shall be freed from many tyrants. And no mortal shall rule over you, but only the Highest who hath sent me ... And he did nothing else to them, save that he dipped them in the stream of the Jordan and let them go, warning them that they should renounce evil deeds. So

1 Robert Eisler, The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist.

would they be given a king who would free them ... And when he was brought to Archelaus, and the learned doctors of the law had assembled, they asked him who he was and where he had been until then. And he answered and said, "I am a Man; as such has the Spirit of God called me ... 2

Eisler sees in this statement of John the Baptist that he is looked upon as a political rebel who, as far back as Archelaus, was chosen by revolutionaries as a "field chaplain." He preached that all who submitted to the authority of Herod were renegades to the Israelite faith. This was the particular sin of which they were to repent and they were to undergo a bath of purification like the proselytes before they could be re-adopted into the New Israel under a national king. Eisler sees in John's baptism a special lustral rite before a war-campaign of liberation.³

From the summary of the teaching of John in Luke 3:14 Eisler says, "The words in question must have been a sort of field sermon delivered before the march into battle."⁴ He translates $\sigma\tau\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\upsilon\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota$ as "persons on the warpath" or "going to war." The New Israel "regenerated through the baptism of John into a 'new covenant' with the national God, is primarily a militia of the coming Messiah, an army of the Christ, the future anointed national king who is their war-lord and army commander and to whose service their soldiers' lives are devoted."⁵

2 Eisler, op.cit., pp. 224ff.

3 Ibid., pp. 267ff.

4 Ibid., p. 265

5 Ibid., p. 270.

This story from these fragments is in error because of inconsistencies and chronological mistakes. The Slavonic Version gives John the Baptist a ministry of over thirty years since it has him going back to the time of Archelaus who was deposed in 6 A.D. Goguel calls this theory of Eisler "one of the most prodigious errors of judgment and method ever made in the domain of historic studies."⁶ Eisler's theory was counter-acted by J.W. Jack who maintained that "it cannot have any foundation in fact" for the simple reason that "the submission of the Jews to John's baptism involved repentance (*μετάνοια*) ... nowhere in the New Testament does the word bear a political signification."⁷ Macgregor's conclusion is that the Slavonic Version is a mediaeval translation into the Russian vernacular of a Christian Byzantine Version of the Greek Jewish War and that this is a Christianized version of Josephus' history.⁸

6 M. Goguel, Jean-Baptiste, Appendix.

7 J.W. Jack, The Historic Christ, p. 119.

8 Macgregor, "John the Baptist and the Origins of Christianity," Expository Times, Vol. 46, 1934-35, p. 357.

APPENDIX B

REPENTANCE

The imperative "repent ye" that issues from the mouth of John the Baptist is the old prophetic cry which is translated "turn ye," "return," and "repent." In all cases without exception it is שׁוּבוּ in the Hebrew that is translated by the above words into English. Instances where the prophetic imperative is translated by "turn ye," "return," and "repent" are as follows:

1. "Return ye"

II Kings 17:13; II Chron. 30:6; Prov. 1:23;
Is. 31:6; Jer. 3:7,14; 25:5; 31:21; Lam. 3:40;
Ezk. 14:6; 18:30,32; 33:11; Hos. 12:6;
Joel 2:12,13; Jonah 3:8; Zech. 1:3,4; 9:12.

2. "Return"

Ps. 90:3; Is. 21:12; 44:22; 55:7; Jer. 3:1,12,
22; 18:11; 35:15; Hos. 6:1; 14:1; Mal. 3:7.

3. "Repent"

Ezk. 14:6; 18:30.

In all of these examples listed above the Hebrew word is שׁוּבוּ.

The two Hebrew words that are used to render in English the meaning of "repent" are שׁוּבוּ and נָחַם. In the LXX שׁוּבוּ is regularly translated into the Greek by ἐπιστρέφω while נָחַם is translated by μετανοέω. So the conclusion is that wherever μετανοέω appears in the Greek New Testament it stands for נָחַם of the Hebrew.¹ Before examining the New Testament passages

1 J.W. Bowman, The Intention of Jesus, p. 30.

where $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\nu\omicron\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ occurs it is necessary to understand the meaning of לָּשׁוּב and $\text{נָחַם$. לָּשׁוּב means just to simply "turn back" or "to return" and does not suggest the nature of that from which or to which this turning is made. The normal use of the verb is void of ethical connotation, and if it is used in this sense, "it requires the addition of other words to indicate the objects with reference to which a moral choice is made."² It is quite the contrary with the Hebrew word $\text{נָחַם$ which means "to be sorry for something or for having done something." "Such a regret," says Moore, "frequently involves a change of mind regarding the future as well as the past, and this, rather than the feeling by which it is prompted, is often the principal import of the word."³

If then the $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$ of Mark 1:4 and the $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\nu\omicron\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ of Matthew 3:2 represent נָחַם , repentance means primarily an emotional attitude of sorrow for sins. However, in the New Testament the emphasis is prophetic and calls for a moral choice between two objects. When John the Baptist comes forward one would expect him to follow in the prophetic line in the use of לָּשׁוּב , but the Gospels instead of giving the LXX equivalent of $\epsilon\nu\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\rho}\omega$ for לָּשׁוּב employed the verb $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\nu\omicron\acute{\epsilon}\omega$. However, the $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\nu\omicron\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ suggests the translation of לָּשׁוּב of the Hebrew

2 Ibid., p. 30.

3 George F. Moore, Judaism, Vol. I, p. 510.

despite the fact that the LXX preferred ἐπιστρέφω. Thus it is discovered that ἐπιστρέφω occurs only three times in the Gospels (Mark 4:12; Matthew 13:15; Luke 1:16,17) (Q); Luke 17:4. Of these the first two occur in a quotation from the Old Testament and the third to human relationships. μετανοέω is used nine times in the Gospels in the ethical sense (Mark 1:15; Mark 6:12; Luke 10:13; Matthew 12:41; Luke 13:3,5; Luke 15:7, 10; Luke 16:30; Matthew 3:2). It seems then that it was this "richer meaning involved in metanoein, a call to make a moral decision between two alternative courses set before one which came to the front in the preaching of John."⁴

⁴ Bowman, op.cit., p. 31.

APPENDIX C

TERMINOLOGY

The word "baptize" occurs in the New Testament some 70 times and about one-half of these are related to the ministry of John the Baptist. The words βαπτίζω, βάπτισμα, and βαπτισμός are used in the New Testament definitely for religious purposes. But neither the verb nor substantive was commonly used in Greek among Jews or Gentiles in connection with religion or religious illustrations. The verb βαπτίζω means literally "to dip" or "sink" and can be used literally or metaphorically. βαπτίζω is the intensive form of the verb βάπτω which means "to dip."

1. βαπτίζω in Classical Greek.

βαπτίζω in the classical Greek means "to immerse."

Polybius describes a naval battle of the Romans and Carthaginians and says, "They sank (ἐβάπτιζον) many of the ships (I, 51, 6). In Plato's Symposium, 176, it is used in a metaphorical sense of drunkenness, and in Euthydemus, 277, it means "overwhelm." The meaning of "overwhelm" is found in Josephus (Jewish War IV, 3. 3).

2. In the LXX.

The simple verb βάπτω is used in the LXX several times in the sense of "dip" (Exodus 12:22, Leviticus 4:6; 4:17; 9:9; 14:6; 14:16; 14:51, etc.). It is also used in the sense of "immerse" (Job 9:31). The intensive form βαπτίζω occurs four

times in the LXX. It is used twice for external bathing (II Kings 5:14f. and Judith 12:7), once metaphorically (Isaiah 21:4) and once as a ritual lustration (Sirach 31:30 (34:25)). The Hebrew of II Kings 5:14 is סָבַח and of Isaiah 21:4 it is סָבַח . The usual verb for ceremonial washing in the LXX is $\lambdaούομαι$ (Leviticus 14:8, 14:9; 15:5-10, 13, 16-22; 16:4, 24-28). The middle voice is used because the unclean person performed this cleansing for himself. The active is used of Moses washing Aaron and his sons before they exercised their priestly function (Exodus 29:4; 40:12; Leviticus 8:6). It is noticed that $\betaαπτίζω$ does not occur in the LXX with any initiatory rites. The two cognate substantives $\betaάπτισμα$ and $\betaαπτισμός$ do not occur in the LXX.

3. In the New Testament.

In the New Testament $\betaαπτίζω$ emerges to prominence without any explanation of its specific sense. Both forms of the substantive, $\betaάπτισμα$ and $\betaαπτισμός$ occur. $\betaαπτίζω$ in a more general sense of Jewish lustrations is found in Mark 7:4 and Hebrews 9:10 but in Hebrews 6:2 it specifically refers to Christian baptism. Josephus (Antiquities 18.5.2) in referring to John's baptism uses $\betaαπτισμός$. In the New Testament $\betaαπτίζω$ is used in a metaphorical sense as in Isaiah (Mark 10:38f. and Luke 12:50 refer to the sufferings of Jesus). It is also used as in Sirach 31:25 in reference to ceremonial purification (Luke 11:38).

APPENDIX D

INFANT BAPTISM

There is no direct evidence in the New Testament for infant baptism. Those who hold that infant baptism was the custom in New Testament days set forth arguments for it because it was a thoroughly legitimate development in New Testament teaching and it was in full accord with the mind of Christ.¹ The usual arguments advanced for infant baptism are the following: the analogy of proselyte baptism and circumcision; the baptism of households; the interest of Jesus in children; children addressed by Paul as being in the Church; I Corinthians 7:14; and the mention of children in Acts 2:39.

Both circumcision and Jewish proselyte baptism are entirely irrelevant to the subjects of baptism.² It has been pointed out in this thesis that Christian baptism came from the baptism of John, which was quite different from proselyte baptism. Proselyte baptism signified a change of creed and admitted Gentiles to the fellowship of Judaism. John's baptism was to prepare men for a New Age and signified a change of life for both Jews and non-Jews (circumcised and uncircumcised). It is held also that Christian baptism is connected with circumcision

1 Flemington, op.cit., p. 130.

2 H.H. Rowley, "The Origin and Meaning of Baptism," The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. XI, 1942-45, p. 314.

and this is set forth as an argument for infant baptism. Since the Jews circumcised all males in infancy, the Christians would then on the analogy of this baptize their babies. It is held that circumcision is the Covenant rite of Judaism and baptism is the Covenant rite of Christianity. If this is followed through to the end, then females should not be baptized in infancy. It is true that Paul connects spiritual circumcision with baptism in Colossians 2:11f., but this is not to be interpreted as baptism being for the Christians what circumcision was for the Jews. This is impossible because for some time the two rites continued together in Jewish Christianity and also because Paul in rejecting one external rite would be adding another to the believers. "The only thing," says Rowley, "that could justify the view that Paul supports Infant Baptism by a parallel with circumcision would be some clear word that can be culled from his writings to show that the subjects for the two rites rendered them parallel. But such a word none has yet adduced."³

Marsh quite plainly states that "the New Testament contains no mention of the baptism of children,"⁴ but a little farther in the discussion on "household baptisms" adds that "it is impossible to imagine that no children were included in their numbers."⁵

3 Ibid., p. 314.

4 Marsh, op.cit., p. 174.

5 Ibid., p. 176.

There is hardly any weight to be given to the baptism of households as including infants. In Acts 2:39 where children are mentioned it is in all probability a reference to posterity and not immediate offsprings.⁶ The fact that Jesus was interested in children and that Paul addressed children in Colossians 3:20 and Ephesians 6:1 does not justify infant baptism. The children in all three cases listed above are children and not infants. I Corinthians 7:14 is neither support for nor against infant baptism.⁷ The whole problem in this passage is that of holiness. Paul tells the members at Corinth that if a woman who is a Christian is married to a pagan she is not, as it was considered among the Jews, illegally married. She was legally married and her children were legitimate and not illegitimate.

It is held by some that the first reference to infant baptism is in Justin Martyr who tells that there were many men and women of sixty and seventy years of age who became disciples of Christ from childhood.⁸ Since the verb $\mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\epsilon\upsilon\omega$ is used here by Justin and also in Matthew 28:19 it is assumed that baptism is included. However, the word is used for children and can mean "little child" as well as "infant." Others take

6 Lambert, op.cit., p. 196.

7 Marsh, op.cit., p. 177.

8 Justin Martyr, Apologia 1:15.

the quotation from Irenaeus⁹ as the earliest reference to the baptism of infants, but here baptism is not directly mentioned, so the passage cannot be cited as a defence of infant baptism.¹⁰ The earliest reference to infant baptism is found in Tertullian.¹¹ This reference implies that baptism of infants by this time was common, but the rite is not supported on apostolic authority as a teaching of the early Church. It is Origen who traces the custom back to the apostles for authentication.¹²

9 Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, ii.22.4.

10 Lambert, op.cit., p. 207.

11 De Baptismo, 18.

12 Epistola ad Romanos v.9.

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